

The American Legion

November 2000
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For God And Country

National
Convention
Page 8



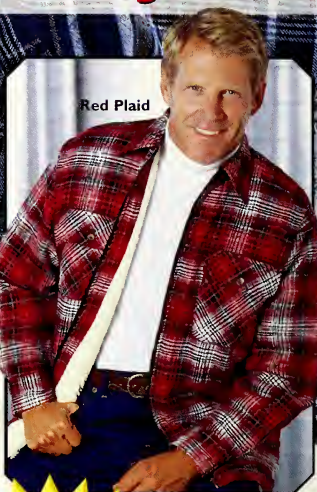
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The American Legion

For God and Country

Vol. 149, No. 5

The Magazine for a Strong America

NOVEMBER 2000

CONVENTION 2000 MILWAUKEE

CONVENTION HONORS YOUNGER VERSIONS OF US *By Tim Shearer* 8
Legionnaires rally in Wisconsin to celebrate the past and set goals for the future.

LEGION ON PARADE *By Tim Shearer* 14
More than 6,000 participants hit the streets of Milwaukee for the National Convention Parade.

SPOTLIGHTS 18
Visits by George W. Bush and Miss America make it a convention to remember.

ROSTER FOR A NEW LEGION YEAR 22
The Legion's top leadership has it all - talent, experience and a desire to serve.

82ND NATIONAL CONVENTION ADOPTS 165 RESOLUTIONS 24
The American Legion's list of priorities charts the course for the coming year.

THE MEN WHO WOULD BECOME PRESIDENT 28
Candidates speak their minds on key election-year issues.

ARTICLES

ROLLING TO LIFE *By Dan Allsup* 36
Disabled veterans emerge from the Wheelchair Games with changed attitudes.

GHOSTS OF THE PAST *By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.* 42
America's policy of appeasement fosters a climate conducive to another widespread war.

SHOWDOWN IN RIVER CITY *By Dan Allsup* 48
The Hoots and the Chiefs battle for No. 1 in The American Legion World Series.

DEPARTMENTS

VETVOICE 4 **WASHINGTON WATCH** 52 **VETS** 56

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE 6 **LEGION NEWS** 54 **PARTING SHOTS** 60

COVER Retired Special Forces veteran Michael Stern throws the discus during field events July 7 at the 20th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in San Antonio. Photo by Fernando Serna. Digital alterations by Holly K. Sora.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.55 million readers. These wartime veterans, working through nearly 15,000 community-level Posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans; their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youths.



14



36



42



48



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Defending our Rights

Congratulations to Al Lance in reference to "Commander Slams China Appeasement" (July). It seems there are so few people anymore who really stand up for justice and our freedoms.

Please continue to push for the rebuilding of our military and defense systems before it is too late. And continue to protect our freedoms as best you can.

— Donald T. Proett, Wahoo, Neb.



Firefighters: Still Serving

Thank you for the article, "Crawling the Halls" (August), about our firefighting brothers in Chicago. Firefighters are a different breed, and we are often misunderstood. Firefighters throughout the nation should be honored for their responsibility and commitment, especially those who have given their lives in service.

— David Paff, Waukegan, Ill.

Essay Was Sad, But True

Ian Foley's essay, "Sad Side of the Military" (Vetvoice, July), confirms a recent conversation I had with some military officers and their wives.

The senior officer, a colonel, explained the difficulty of keeping quality people in military service because they are easily attracted to civilian jobs with more lucrative wages. The junior officer, a captain, and his wife explained the problems of finding affordable housing. His wife, who was in charge of dependent support services, explained that many married enlisted personnel had off-base jobs, were on food stamps and usually couldn't afford dependable transportation. This is truly a sad side of the military. Is it any wonder that attrition is so high?

— Andy Brorsen, Bourbonnais, Ill.

Article a Real Life-Saver

Do you realize the service you have provided with the article, "Miniature Strokes: TIAs" (August)? Nobody is immune from strokes, regardless of age. That article may save lives.

I have lived with a stroke victim for 11 years. My wife and I tour the state, speaking for the Minnesota Stroke Association and the American Heart Association. The devastation of a stroke is beyond comprehension.

— Ellwyn K. Collins, Burnsville, Minn.

Only the Beginning ...

I appreciate the August Commander's message about the need to apply the same payment guidelines to test-site and nuclear-factory workers as to atomic veterans. It is important to bring these dual standards to the public's attention.

During the Marine Corps' occupation of Nagasaki from 1945-1946, there were no film badges provided. But even worse, not one official warning was given about the dangers of radiation or plutonium.

After years of effort, on May 20, 1988, the "Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act of 1988" was passed. Ten years later, less than 600 veterans or their survivors had been granted benefits, according to VA reports.

The real tragedy and scandal in all this has been the manner in which VA, the Justice Department, the Defense

Department and the Energy Department have all combined in their efforts to prevent veterans, their widows and genetically harmed children from obtaining justice. Your article lifts the lid on a very cruel chapter on treatment of veterans.

— Walter G. Hooke, Cambridge, N.Y.



The U.S. Army 1st Armored Division was deployed in Bosnia.

New Deployment Policy

The article, "Army Sets New Policy Limiting Deployments" (On Duty, August), concerned me. I am in the National Guard and my unit is to be sent to Kuwait for five months. I am excited, as are the other members of my unit. However, we can't help but feel neglected.

In many cases, veterans applying for government jobs get bonus points. This does not apply to the National Guard or Reserves unless you have served in a deployment for 180 days or more. I see this as the government saving money, not doing us a favor.

I will have spent six years in the service of my country including an overseas deployment to a country that Congress still considers a hostile area, yet I am not considered a veteran.

— Christopher M. Jones, Franklin, Ind.

Coast Guard Plug

Thank you for the article about the Coast Guard ("Standing Watch," July). You helped raise the visibility of the smallest member of our armed forces. The Coast Guard is constantly tasked with doing more work with less money.

— Retired Chief Warrant Officer Dale Bartels, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, Travelers Rest, S.C.

Correction

Editor's Note: In the article "No Easy Life" (September), Ms. Keil referred to C-47 and C-54 aircraft, rather than the C-119s as printed. We apologize for the error.

WE WANT YOUR OPINIONS

The American Legion Magazine welcomes letters concerning articles that appear in the publication. Letter writers are also encouraged to submit photographs of themselves for possible publication with their letters. Be sure to include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters are subject to editing. Send your opinions to:

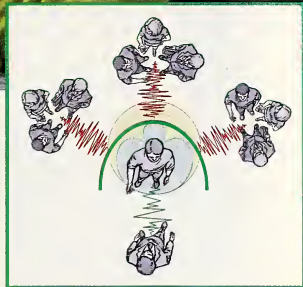
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Important news about digital hearing aids.



Seems like every company that makes hearing aids is talking about digital these days. But none of them offer AudioZoom™, our patented technology proven in clinical tests to help hearing-aid wearers better understand speech in background noise. And background noise is the major complaint among hearing-aid wearers.

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Legionnaires Can Make Recruiting Fun

During my acceptance speech at this year's National Convention, I promised to end the membership slide of this great organization. With your help, I know we can accomplish the task.

All Legionnaires have their own membership stories, and I'm no different. Forty-five years ago, my neighbor in Benson, N.C., knocked on my door. I had just returned home after four years in the Air Force. He was a veteran of World War I and wanted me to join his American Legion Post. He was persuasive, but I doubt even he had any idea of how The American Legion would shape my future. As your National Commander, I want you to consider how a simple invitation to join The American Legion might impact our future. The way to boost membership is to

"As Legionnaires we know how to have fun. Softball games, family picnics and golf tournaments are frequent events. All of those fun activities can and should be turned into recruiting opportunities."

make recruiting FUN.

As Legionnaires we know how to have fun. Softball games, family picnics and golf tournaments are frequent events at many of our 15,000 Posts across the country. All of those fun activities can and should be turned into recruiting opportunities.

And what could be more fun than visiting your local military installation to interact with the fine young men and women in uniform? We are accomplishing this through our Reconnect Program. Sadly, many service members on active

duty don't even know they are eligible for Legion membership.

Fighting for Freedom. When speaking with members of your military community, remind them the Legion is fighting for decent pay raises, health care and benefits for those defending America's freedom. Tell them The American Legion wants to ensure that they have the weapons and manpower to train properly and – if need be – win America's wars.

Tell potential Legionnaires that the world's largest veterans organization cares about America's youth. We prove this through such programs as American Legion Baseball, Oratorical contests and Boys State/Nation, just to name a few.

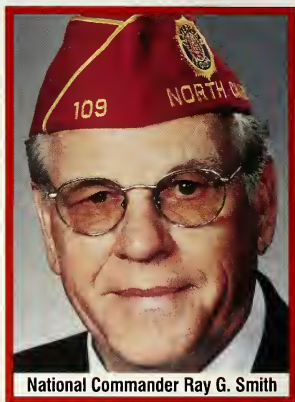
And when an emergency strikes, we are there! We are no strangers to floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes or other natural disasters. Just more than a year ago, members of my Post were running ice machines to keep milk cold for babies during North Carolina's severe floods. At a cemetery in the eastern part of the state, Legionnaires were tying uprooted caskets to trees to keep them from floating away. Three hurricanes and 37 inches of rain in one week took their toll, but that didn't stop Legionnaires from mobilizing. Our National Emergency Fund provided more than \$144,000 in grants to veterans and their families during their time of need.

Some of the best recruiting opportunities come from "thinking outside the box."

One Florida Post, for example, is using the current gas crunch as an opportunity to gain new members. Members of the Arthur Sawyer Post 28 in Key West earn \$10 in free gas at a local service station for each person they recruit.

Ray's Aces. I plan to initiate my own "Ray's Aces" program by awarding pins to Legionnaires who recruit five or more members. Special recognition will also go to Posts that meet their recruiting goals for 2000 and 2001.

If a veteran says the Legion is not for him or her, remind the potential Legionnaire that our membership is as diverse as



National Commander Ray G. Smith

it is large. We have Posts made up of firefighters, police officers, pilots and Harley-Davidson riders! We have Posts at sea and in foreign lands. We have a Hollywood Post and even an Elvis Presley Post.

A fair question often asked by non-members is "why join?" When asked this, I try to answer with a poem that I once read. I don't know who wrote it, but it goes like this:

*For God and country, to serve and care,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.*



*To make my country a better place
and meet my neighbor face to face,*

*To help the distressed, their cross to bear,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.*

*To face with courage the coming day,
and teach my children how to pray,*

*To make my flag a symbol rare,
That's why I'm a Legionnaire.*

*And when our Great Commander calls
And taps are sounded for each and all,*

*Forget not to breathe a prayer, and
thank the Lord
I'm a Legionnaire.*



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National Commander Al Lance salutes the American Flag during the opening of the 82nd National Convention.

LEGION HONORS Younger versions of US

6,000 Legion delegates meet in Milwaukee.

By Tim Shearer

As National Commander Al Lance presided over the opening session of the 82nd American Legion National Convention, he focused heavily on the positive actions that have marked the past year.

"We all survived the Y2K scare, and The American Legion, I'm proud to report, is alive and well," he said as the Convention was called to order in Milwaukee's Midwest Express Center Sept. 5. "I promised to travel and see American fighting men and women on active duty around the world. I did this, and now I can tell you from first-

"I promised to travel and see American fighting men and women on active duty around the world. I did this, and now I can tell you from firsthand observation that they are dedicated. They are, in essence, younger versions of us."

— National Commander Al Lance,
during his opening statements at the 82nd National Convention

hand observation that they are dedicated. They are, in essence, younger versions of us."

Conventioners heard Republican presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush share his vision for America. Vice President Al Gore, though invited, was conspicuously absent from the Convention (See "Gore snubs Legion family" on page 18).

Veterans Vote 2000. Bush's speech helped kick off "Veterans Vote 2000," an online straw poll designed to give the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates feedback from America's veteran, active-duty, Reserve and Guard communities. Straw-poll voters were able to register online and cast ballots on issues through Oct. 17. The text of Bush's remarks to the 6,000 convention delegates was posted on the Web site. The Web site also carried public statements made by Gore on issues affecting veterans.

During his speech, Bush pledged to rebuild the military power of America, address veterans' rights and constitutionally protect the American Flag from desecration.

"It's an honor to be here in the presence of veterans," said Bush, a veteran of the Texas Air National Guard and a member of Legion Post 77 in Houston. "When duty called in the country's hour of need, it was you who answered the call and I respect what you did."

Education concerns topped Bush's agenda, and he praised The Legion for its efforts to improve the lives of children across the nation. "You care for the young through child welfare foundations and through the Children's

Miracle Network," he said. "The American Legion is helping build knowledge and character in our young people. You introduce students to the best traditions of this country."

Bush voiced a commitment to those who served. As veterans age, they have needs that need to be addressed, especially in the area of health care.

"No discussion of health care is complete without addressing concerns of veterans," Bush said. "When I'm elected you will have an advocate working daily in the White House."

He explained that great things have been born out of the veterans' health-care system, including CAT scans and a cure for tuberculosis, but it is still a "complicated, bureaucratic process."

"Veterans are faced with long lines and a confusing process that leads to denial of claims that no one can



Miss America 2000 Heather Renee French sings the National Anthem during the opening ceremonies of the Milwaukee Convention.

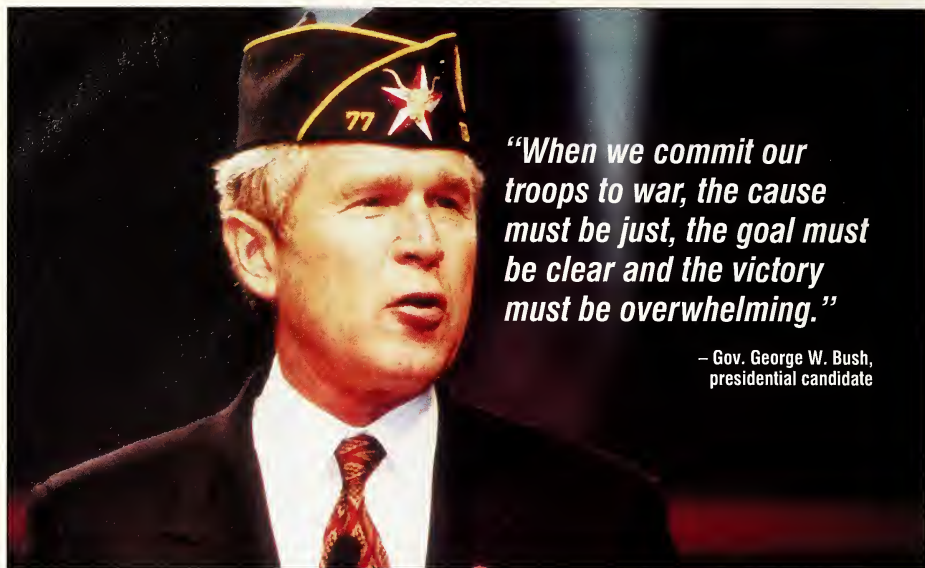
explain," he said. "And it takes an average of 745 days to get an answer on an appeal."

"The present administration claims to have reinvented government," he added. "But that doesn't seem fair and friendly to me."

To that end Bush promised to return VA to its prior role as an organization existing to help veterans and make it



Jennifer Mele of iBelong, center, shows The American Legion Web site to Frederick Correy Sr., Post 69, Providence, R.I. (left) and Joe Schaefer, Post 67, Lincoln Park, Mich. Veterans can log onto www.MyLegion.com to read the presidential candidates' positions on veterans' issues.



"When we commit our troops to war, the cause must be just, the goal must be clear and the victory must be overwhelming."

— Gov. George W. Bush, presidential candidate

Texas Gov. George W. Bush addresses a gathering of The American Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion at the Convention. The presidential hopeful affirmed his commitment to protect the flag.

easier for them to get the help they deserve. He said he would establish a task force on veterans' health care, manned with competent people who understand the needs of veterans.

Also on the forefront of his agenda, Bush said, is the World War II Memorial in Washington.

"We need to preserve the memory

of your service," he told the Legionnaires. "We need to get the memorial where it belongs — right in the heart of the nation's capital."

He also noted there are empty spaces for names on the Vietnam Memorial, reserved for those still missing from that war, and that nothing less than full accounting is acceptable. "All who serve this country must know that they will never be abandoned by America," he said.

Flag-Protection Amendment. Bush affirmed his commitment to Old Glory. "You and I share a commitment to veterans who wrote America's proud record of defending freedom. You and I also share a commitment to the nation's symbol," he said. "We must not allow for desecration of our American Flag."

He then spoke of a commitment to future veterans. "The present administration inherited a military that was ready for the challenges and dangers that face our nation," he said. "The next president will inherit a military in decline, and Legionnaires understand this problem and many Legionnaires have spoken out.

"Should I become president I will

rebuild the military power of the United States," he promised.

Bush said the military's morale is undermined by back-to-back deployments, poor pay and shortages of equipment. "Let's get this straight," he added. "These aren't criticisms of the military; they are criticisms of the current commander in chief and vice president for not providing the proper leadership."

Bush promised to provide that leadership to America's military forces and said he plans to do so by speaking up and demanding nothing but the best.

"We will act to give our armed forces better pay, better treatment and better training," he said.

The presidential hopeful also promised to curtail the increasing demands put on the armed forces. "America will be involved in the world, but that doesn't mean our military will be the answer to every single difficult foreign relations policy question," he said. "I'll order an immediate review of our overseas commitments in dozens of countries."

Bush said he plans to make it clear that America will not put troops on the ground to keep warring parties apart all around the world. "We'll let our



Retired Maj. Gen. Patrick Brady tells delegates why he believes Old Glory should be protected.

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friends be peacekeepers; the great country of America will be peacemakers," he said.

The military needs to be fully prepared to fight and win wars, Bush said, adding that there are too many distractions taking away from this. He added that a strong military is one of the primary keys to preventing war in the first place.

"I will use this window of opportunity to create a military for the future," he said. "Our military is organized to face threats we used to have in the Cold War. We need a military that is ready to face the challenges of this new century."

Bush said he envisions a force that is fast to deploy, easy to sustain and packs a potent punch that can win overwhelming victories.

"When we commit our troops to war, the cause must be just, the goal must be clear and the victory must be overwhelming," he said.

"America is great because of our people," Bush said. "And the veterans of America are the best people America has ever produced."

Miss America Sings. Highlighting the opening ceremony were Miss America 2000 Heather Renee French, singing the National Anthem, and the Youth Choral Group from Milwaukee's Roosevelt School of the Arts, performing five patriotic songs.

Conventioneers honored two Past National Commanders who passed away. Roger Munson, who served from 1992 to 1993, and Erle Cocke Jr., commander from 1950 to 1951, were honored as Sergeant-at-Arms Charles F. Price Sr. lit the peace candle.

This year's Youth Champions were introduced, and the new Spirit of Service Awards were given to active-duty members of each of the military services. (See "Legion honors friends" on page 20.)

Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson was one of the first to sum up the positive impact The Legion has in his state as well as across America. "There are 76,000 Legionnaires in Wisconsin's 527 Posts, and they form the patriotic, civic and social nucleus of our small towns. That's the way it is across America," he said.

After Thompson welcomed the Legionnaires, Lance returned to the podium to present The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal to Sen.



National Chaplain Bishop David R. Brown of Covington, La., opened and closed the Convention sessions with prayer.

Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. Hatch has been a strong voice in Congress for the past 16 years, representing Legion views and helping promote the causes of Americanism, the flag-protection amendment and a strong national defense.

"I have always appreciated the input of people from The American Legion," Hatch said. "America also owes The Legion a lot. Through scholarship, speaking and other youth programs, you are lifting young people to higher and higher levels."

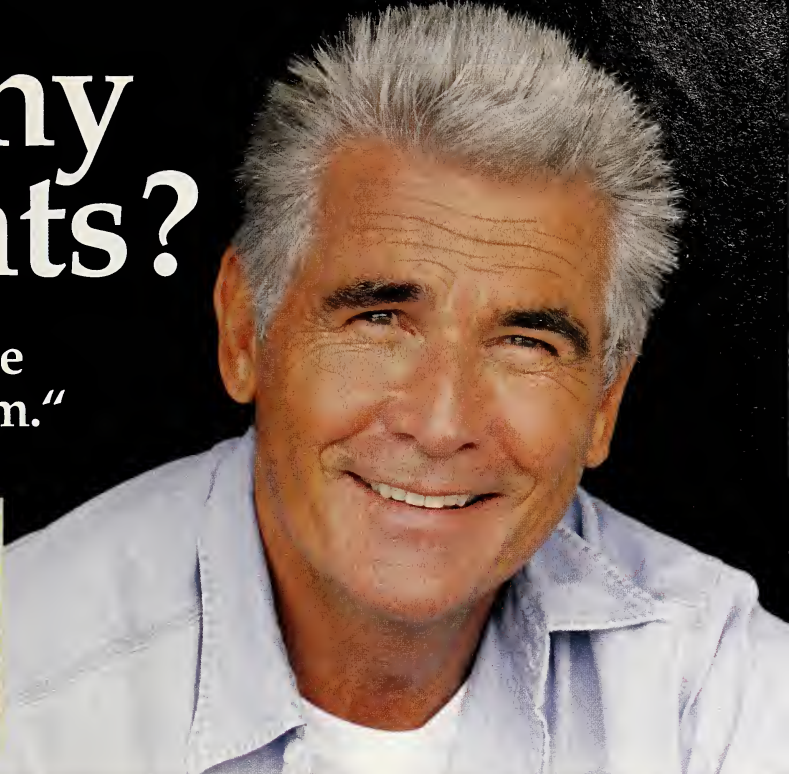
Hatch warned, though, that there are voices out there trying to trivialize the things The Legion stands for. "We need to stay the course and drown out those who think that desecrating our flag is an acceptable form of protest," he said. "We need to drown out the voice of an administration that year after year pays nothing but lip service to veterans' needs until an election year comes around."

Hatch's strongest message centered
(See page 16)

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James Brolin



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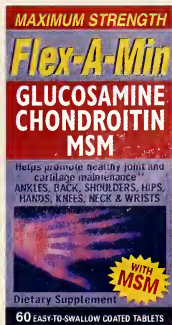
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Legion on Parade

Milwaukee rolls out red carpet

By Tim Shearer

The American Legion 82nd Annual National Convention Parade kicked off in front of Milwaukee's Midwest Express Center Sept. 3, with an estimated 6,000 parade participants. More than 100 units thrilled a crowd that lined the route.

The parade represented a year of planning and behind-the-scenes work by many volunteers, including Parade Chairman Earl Rigg of the Department of Wisconsin and his staff.

Milwaukee mounted police and a series of color guards led the parade down Wisconsin Avenue, ending near the Lake Michigan waterfront. Marching units, U.S. Army combat vehicles and a thundering swarm of Harley-Davidson motorcycles rounded out the event.

"The annual parade is all about patriotism and showing the American people what The Legion is all about," said Billy Bell, who was marching with Legionnaires from South Carolina. "I've marched in each parade since 1992 and it's an important part of the con-

vention to many of us."

Bell, who was South Carolina Department Commander in 1991, also explained how Legion participation in parades is growing more important each year. "So many children don't have parents who are GIs and aren't learning about the flag or developing a love for our country," he said. "Parades are a chance to get out and show Americans how to salute and honor the flag."

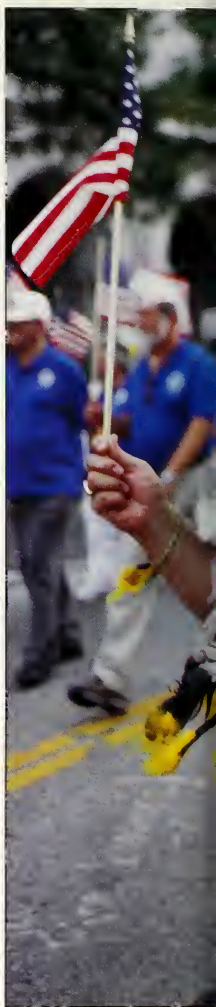
Bell also places flags in schoolrooms in his hometown.

"We all need to get involved in teaching the younger generation about flag respect," he added.

One young man, Robert Birchett, 11, of Phoenix needed no coaxing to march with his grandmother and the rest of Post 35. "I guess it is about patriotism," he said. "This is my first parade and it's really exciting to be out here." His grandmother, Jeanne Birchett, said that events like parades will help Robert's generation develop respect for veterans. □

Tim Shearer is a member of Post 137 in Orange Park, Fla.

Article design: Holly K. Soria



Above, left: National Commander Al Lance marches through downtown Milwaukee.

Above: "Chief" Wayne Pedigo leads the Oklahoma delegation.

Right: Rockland, Maine, Vanguard Color Guard members Nancy Brackett, left, Brenda Kalen and Nick Weatherby salute Old Glory.



Members of the Waukesha, Wis., South High School Band join American Legion parade units on the streets of Milwaukee with a flag routine of their own.



This year's American Legion Youth Champions were part of the parade festivities. From left are Justin Chapa, Boys Nation president; Max Miller, National High School Oratorical Contest winner; Jeremy Roberts, American Legion Baseball Player of the Year; Daniel Crews, Junior Shooting Sports Champion; Emma Tendick, Girls Nation president; and Erik Swensen, Eagle Scout of the Year.



Marching Legionnaires hold Old Glory high during the 82nd National Convention Parade in Milwaukee. The parade had about 6,000 participants and more than 100 units.



National Commander Al Lance congratulates Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, after Hatch was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

on the flag amendment as he related a story from Sen. John McCain's days as a POW. One of his fellow prisoners made an American Flag out of scraps of cloth and was beaten when his communist captors found it. The night after the beating, the severely-battered-but-not-defeated prisoner stoically began sewing a new one.

"That flag was not just a piece of cloth to those men," Hatch said. "It was a symbol. It was something that sustained them."

"With your help, this next Congress can pass a constitutional amendment to protect our flag against desecration."

Another warrior in the fight to protect the flag, retired Maj. Gen. Patrick H. Brady, U.S. Army, also was optimistic about the amendment.

"Someday our voice will be heard, and it will make a difference," said

politicians had been met," he said. "I would challenge those who support desecration of the flag to tell warriors face-to-face that they are fighting for the right of others to burn the flag. Old Glory is a constant companion to our troops in the field. We will recapture our flag."

Secretary of Defense William Cohen, who delivered a videotaped message, lauded the Legion's support for the military. Cohen said that fewer Americans are familiar with the military, but organizations like The American Legion help re-establish that connection.

Lt. Gen. Timothy Maude, deputy chief of staff for personnel for the U.S. Army, emphasized the need to bridge the gap between those who have served and those who haven't. "We need to get the message out that serv-

ing the country is the right thing to do," he said. "It's more than a job or a way to see the world—it is a jump-start in life."

He asked for the support of Legionnaires to spread this message to every town in America. "You are the influencers," Maude said. "You are the ones young Americans will listen to."

National Commander Ray Smith. Convention delegates elected Air Force veteran Ray Smith as The American Legion's National Commander for 2000-2001.

"The membership slide is over," Smith told cheering delegates during his acceptance speech. "It's time to make recruiting members fun."

Smith, a former North Carolina Department Commander and National Vice Commander, stressed community service to the delegates.

"When you have fun in everything you do at the Post," he added, "when you create a bond with members of The American Legion family, you have success in every program, including membership."

Smith said Convention delegates have an obligation to share this dream with members of their communities and to involve every member in membership.

Smith is a fighter for the flag-protection amendment. "I'm not a lawyer. I don't have a Ph.D. Shucks, I'm just a country boy from North Carolina," he said. "People ask me why we keep pushing this amendment. I answer



Singer Crystal Gayle was the featured performer at the Convention banquet. Gayle performed her signature songs "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" and "I'll Get Over You."



"When you have fun in everything you do at the Post, when you create a bond with members of The American Legion family, you have success in every program, including membership."

— Ray G. Smith, during his acceptance speech as the new National Commander



Air Force veteran Ray Smith is sworn in by Past National Commander E. Roy Stone.

them from my heart: Because it's the right thing to do!

"I don't believe desecrating the flag is freedom of speech. I do believe that we truly represent the majority of Americans. That is why I keep pushing the amendment. That is why we will be successful."

Smith predicted big things ahead for the world's largest veterans' organization. "We will taste victory for our flag. We will continue to dare mighty things. We will increase our membership," he said. "We will keep the National Emergency Fund solvent. We will take the Child Welfare Foundation to new heights. And we will have fun doing all of this." □

Tim Shearer is a member of Post 137 in Orange Park, Fla. The American Legion Magazine editor John Raughter also contributed to this report.



Ray Smith's supporters rally for his candidacy during the Milwaukee Convention.

Article design: Holly K. Soria

Gore snubs Legion family, misses National Convention

Vice President Al Gore became the first non-incumbent presidential candidate to decline an invitation to speak at an American Legion National Convention.

Disappointing thousands of Legionnaires in Milwaukee and the nearly 4 million members of The American Legion family, the Democratic candidate offered to send a surrogate in his place.

"It is Albert Gore who is running for president of the United States, not a substitute, no matter how well qualified — so I refused the offer," National Commander Al Lance said on the

Convention podium, as the crowd roared with approval.

"I believe The American Legion, the world's largest war-time veterans' organization, deserves to hear directly from the man himself. The man who would be commander in chief — and no other."

Lance pointed out that in 1992 then-Gov. Clinton spoke before the Legion to explain the circumstances surrounding his failure to serve in the military during Vietnam. "That was a genuine ordeal by fire before this audience, yet he was warmly received. Even President Bush was applauded — and forgiv-

en — when he declared that September 7th was the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. I think the record shows that we are clearly non-partisan."

Lance said the Legion's straw poll, which measures Legionnaire support for the candidates' stand on important issues, would continue. Legion staff members researched Gore's public statements regarding the issues in question. Those statements were posted on www.MyLegion.com. Excerpts from Gov. Bush's speech before the Legion Convention were also included on the Web site.

American Legion donates \$3.5M to WWII Memorial

The American Legion reiterated its support, financially and otherwise, for construction of the World War II Memorial on The Mall in Washington, D.C.

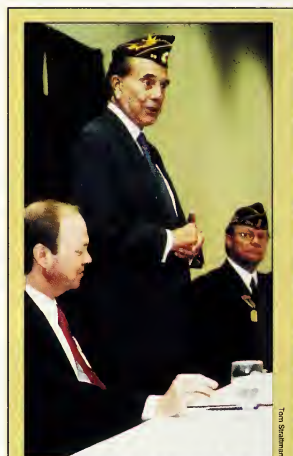
During the Convention, then-National Commander Al Lance vowed that The Legion would continue to advocate in favor of the memorial's proposed site and location (the site has since won final approval from the National Capitol Planning Commission). Lance also presented a \$3.5 million donation to the memorial's fundraising campaign on behalf of the entire American Legion family.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Herling, secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission and a member of Legion Post 19 in Washington, accepted the donation as well as individual contributions raised by Departments.

"Lately, it seems, a vocal minority has set out to derail the construction of the World War II Memorial on The Mall in our nation's capital," Lance said. "Thankfully, they have not been successful. The American Legion family is very proud to work with the American Battle Monuments Commission and to have been a small part of this gigantic undertaking."

Tonawandas, Joliet win battle of Legion bands

"Harmonious war" might seem like an oxymoron, but not to those who wit-



Dole at Convention — Former Sen. Bob Dole leads a discussion on healthy aging with Legionnaires and Auxiliary members at the National Convention. Next to Dole are Dr. Mike Magee of Pfizer Inc., left, and Dennis Henkemeyer, vice chairman of The American Legion Magazine Commission.

nessed the best bands in The American Legion square off in Milwaukee.

The Tonawandas from the Department of New York placed first in the Concert Band Competition, held at the Midwest Express Center. They were followed by The American Legion bands from greater Kansas City, Joliet, Ill., and Oconomowoc, Wis. The bands were rated according to their instrumen-

tation, conducting, articulation, and intonation and repertoire skills.

The musicians from Joliet won the Parade Band competition. The bands were judged by their musicianship, march and maneuver skills and general effect. The Tonawandas and The American Legion band from Fargo, N.D., placed second and third, respectively.

Color Guards razor sharp at Legion drill competition

Sixteen drill units marched center stage at the convention center, competing for top honors in one of The Legion's most visible programs.

"We marched into battle under those colors," said Bill Stokes, chief judge of national competition. "The flag is a meaningful thing to many, many people and The Legion is a driving force behind the amendment that is designed to protect it."

The top three finishers in each of the categories were:

Military Open Class

Post 86 from Rockville, Md.
Pure Haven Color Guard from Ames, Iowa
SAL Squadron 148 from Baltimore.

Senior Open Class

Lady Liberties Color Guard, Unit 1830 from Scottsville, N.Y.
Apple Core Color Guard, Post 370 from Louisiana, Mo.
Edward Schultz Post 697 from Lansing, Ill.

Military Class

Albany Post 10 from Albany, Ore.
Port City Post 260 from Portage, Ind.
Edward Schultz Post 697 from Lansing, Ill.

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Miss America Heather Renee French addresses the Convention.

Miss America rallies troops at Convention

After singing a powerful version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the opening ceremonies of The American Legion's 82nd National Convention, Miss America 2000 Heather Renee French summed up her year of promoting veterans' causes.

"I think of many things when I sing the Anthem with my hand over my heart," she said. "I often think about my father and brother. But this time I also thought about how this is the last time I will be singing this song as Miss America. I'm proud to be doing this for The Legion."

Then-National Commander Al Lance described how, during her reign, Miss America has been more than just a vocal advocate for veterans' issues. "She got down in the trenches and didn't just talk to homeless vets, she put her arm around them," Lance said. "She stood by us in The Legion and people listened to her."

"Remember her name, because this isn't the last we are going to see of this young lady," he added.

French, brandishing her Miss America crown, compared the shiny headpiece to the plight of homeless veterans, a cause she has championed throughout her reign. "This crown is not just a decoration for pretentious purposes," she said. "Every jewel and every sparkle represents who you are and a better way of life for those 275,000 homeless veter-

ans who sleep on the street every night.

"You are the ones who deserve the spotlight," she said. "Each of you deserves the best our country has to offer."

Legion honors friends, presents awards

The American Legion often uses its National Conventions as a forum to present awards to outstanding Americans. This year was no different. However, the 82nd Convention was the debut of the new Spirit of Service Awards.

Enlisted representatives from the five armed services were honored for their volunteer service to their local communities.

Recipients of this year's awards were Air Force Staff Sgt. Billy Fly, Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd class Corey King, Army Sgt. Laura Jernigan, Marine

Sgt. Evella Smith and Navy Petty Officer 2nd class Annette Marie French.

The Legion also recognized those who excelled in the organization's youth programs during the past year. They were Boys Nation President Justin Chapa, Junior Shooting Sports Gold Medalist Daniel Crews, National Oratorical Contest winner Max Miller, Eagle Scout of the Year Erik Swensen and 1999 Baseball Player of the Year Jeremy S. Roberts.

The American Legion Fourth Estate Award for outstanding journalism went to "Dateline NBC" for its investigative piece "Body of Evidence."

The William Randolph Hearst Trophy went to the Department of Alaska for its devotion to Americanism programs. The Frank Belgrano Jr. Award was presented to the Department of Illinois for its strong support of Boy Scouts. The Department of Arizona won the Ralph T. O'Neil Education Award for supporting The American Legion Medal program.

Employer of the Year awards went to companies dedicated to hiring veterans. Garlick Helicopters of Hamilton, Mont., won top honors in the small-business category. ITS Medical Systems of Tomah, Wis., won in the mid-size (51-200 employees) category. Boeing Aerospace Operations, based in Midwest City, Okla., was named Employer of the Year for a company with more than 200 employees.

Outstanding Employment Service Office of the Year honors went to the Oklahoma City Metro South Office.

Tom Little, a police officer from Decatur, Ala., was honored as The American Legion National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

The Garland D. Murphy Jr. Award was presented to the Department of Florida for its support of the Child Welfare Foundation. The Department of Indiana was named the winner of the Child Welfare Foundation Legacy Award.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Billy Fly, left, Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Corey King, Army Sgt. Laura Jernigan, Marine Sgt. Evella Smith and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Annette Marie French are honored with The American Legion's Spirit of Service Awards.

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Roster for a New Legion Year

Henry P. Bradley

National Vice Commander — Northeast Region



1962-95

Home: Quincy, Mass.
Legion Membership: 30 years; Post 294

Military Service: Mass. Air National Guard, 1957-61; U.S. Air Force, 1961-1962; Air Guard/ Army Reserve,

Occupation: Police Officer (ret.); Director of Veterans Services, Quincy, Mass.

Legion Highlights: Post Adj., 1970; Post Cmdr., 1972-73, 1985-86; Dept. Cmdr., 1994-95

National Positions: NEC, Legislative Cmsn.; Constitution and By Laws, and Constitutional Amendments Cmtes.

Region Includes: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1979-80; Post Adj., 1981-87; Dept. Adj., 1988-93; Dept. Cmdr., 1993-94

National Positions: Public Relations Cmsn.; Constitution and By Laws Cmte.

Region Includes: Alabama, Arkansas, France, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas

Dr. Calvin C. Turpin

National Chaplain



Home: Hollister, Calif.
Legion Membership: 15 years; Post 69

Military Service: U.S. Army, 1943-45
Occupation: Ordained Southern Baptist Minister;

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1989-90, 93-94
National Positions: Legislative and Foreign Relations Cmsns.; Legislative Cncl.

James E. (Jim) Koutz

National Vice Commander — Midwest Region



Company (ret.); Warrick Co. Veterans Service Officer

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1973-84 (nine terms); Dept. Membership Chair, 1989-90; Dept. Cmdr., 1990-91

National Positions: Legislative and Foreign Relations Cmsns.; Legislative Cncl.

Region Includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

William A. (Bill) Weatherly

National Vice Commander — Southeast Region



Home: Sumter, S.C.

Legion Membership: 53 years; Post 15
Military Service: U.S. Army, 1945-47
Occupation: Salesman and Contractor (ret.); Sumter Co. Veterans Assoc. Chair

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1968-69; Dept. Cmdr., 1978-79; Dept. Membership Chair

National Positions: Americanism Cncl. Vice Chair (15 years)
Region Includes: Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

James L. Buterbaugh

National Historian



Home: Winfield, Kan.

Legion Membership: 32 years; Post 10
Military Service: U.S. Navy Reserves, 1963-69
Occupation: Accountant, 1971-77; Insurance-Real Estate Broker, 1977-present

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1988-89, 1998-2000; Dist. Cmdr., 1991-92; Dept. Historian, 1992-98

John C. Pellegrini

National Vice Commander — Western Region



Army, 1944-46

Occupation: Soft Drink Sales Manager and Plant Manager (ret.); Exec. Board, Anaconda Chamber of Commerce; Secretary-Treasurer, Montana Soft Drink Association

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1985-87; Dept. Exec. Committee, 1991-93; Dept. Cmdr., 1994-95

National Positions: NEC, Children and Youth Cmsn.; Membership and Post Activities Cmte.
Region Includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Mexico, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Philippines, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

R. Shuford Edmisten

National Sergeant-At-Arms



Home: Hendersonville, N.C.

Legion Membership: 17 years; Post 77
Military Service: U.S. Army, 1968-71
Occupation: Vice-President, Northwestern Bank (ret.); Manager, Forest Lawn Cemetery

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1988-89; Dist. Cmdr., 1990-91; Dist. Membership Chair, 1996-98; Dept. Cmdr., 1992-93
National Positions: Public Relations and Constitutional Amendments Cmsns.; Foreign Relations and Convention Cmtes.; Americanism and Legislative Cncls.

Walter "Frank" Stancil

Aide to the National Commander



Home: Cary, N.C.
Legion Membership: 16 years; Post 67

Military Service: U.S. Navy, 1959-63
Occupation: North Carolina Highway Patrol (ret.)

Legion Highlights: Post Cmdr., 1991-93; Post Adj., 1994-96; Department Cmdr., 1997-98
National Positions: Foreign Relations Cmsn.; Distinguished Guests Cmte.; Legislative Cncl.

Photos by Tom Strickland



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MILWAT-ALM-11/00

82nd National Convention adopts 165 resolutions

**Legionnaires express
their collective will.**

*Now, therefore, be it
Resolved...*

AMERICANISM

Chairman Joseph E. Caouette Jr. (N.H.)

Res. No. 299 — U.S. Citizenship Process — Encourages Congress to ensure comprehensive background checks are made on all citizenship applicants and to prohibit the demeaning of the naturalization process and ceremonies.

Res. No. 300 — Constitutional Amendment to Protect the U.S. Flag — Reaffirms The American Legion's commitment to secure constitutional protection for the flag from acts of physical desecration.

Res. No. 320 — Illegal Aliens — Supports strict enforcement of heavy penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens; encourages funding for INS; urges denial of government benefits to illegal aliens; urges Congress not to expand the current legalization program; and calls for legislation to guarantee mutual assistance between government agencies.

Res. No. 321 — Injured or Disabled Non-Citizen Veterans Applying for Naturalization — Supports legislation that will allow certain non-citizen veterans to seek naturalization.

Res. No. 322 — Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion — Opposes legislation that would give conscientious objectors the option of diverting their tax monies from military spending.

Res. No. 323 — Opposition to a Constitutional Convention — Opposes a Constitutional Convention and any efforts to alter existing procedures for amending the Constitution.

Res. No. 324 — Internal Security of the United States — Urges Congress to restore the U.S. House Internal Security Committee, to strengthen the CIA and FBI, and to deny subversive individuals or groups the ability to infiltrate government agencies through federal employment.

Res. No. 325 — School Prayer — Reaffirms support for a constitutional amendment that would permit voluntary prayer in public buildings, and urges legislation to promote the concept of school prayer.

Res. No. 326 — Pledge of Allegiance — Encourages the President of the U.S. Senate and speaker of the House of Representatives or designees to lead the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at each daily session, and urges Congress to designate the Pause for the Pledge of Allegiance as part of National Flag Day celebrations.

Res. No. 327 — Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates — Urges Congress to restore the official observance of Lincoln's Birthday to Feb. 12, Washington's Birthday to Feb. 22, Memorial Day to May 30 and Columbus Day to Oct. 12 each year; urges legislation to call on all American institutions, public and private, to toll their bells for one minute at 11 a.m. on Memorial Day.

Res. No. 328 — Star-Spangled Banner — Encourages the playing of the national anthem at all sporting events; urges radio and television stations to not pre-empt the event; and promotes the establishment of March 3 as a national observance for "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Res. No. 329 — Award Medal of Honor to the Four Chaplains — Requests Congress to award the Medal of Honor posthumously to four Army chaplains for heroism which cost them their lives Feb. 3, 1943.

Res. No. 330 — Foreign Manufacture of American Flags — Encourages purchase and display of American flags manufactured only in the United States, and seeks legislation to prohibit the importation of foreign-made flags.

Res. No. 331 — English as the Official U.S. Language —

Urges Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to establish English as the official national language, and to fund alternative bilingual education programs to achieve English proficiency.

Res. No. 332 — Immigration Reform — Urges action to stop illegal immigration into this country.

Res. No. 333 — Filipino Veterans Citizenship Interview Requirement — Seeks a government ruling to allow Filipino veterans to apply for U.S. citizenship in the Philippines.

Res. No. 334 — Support of Boy Scouts of America — Supports the Boy Scouts of America in its efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Chairman Elmer Fuhrhop (Ohio)

Res. No. 301 — Admission of Children of U.S. Citizens — Seeks amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide equal treatment in admission of all children of U.S. citizens.

Res. No. 302 — Children in Pornographic Literature — Encourages improvements in state and federal laws aimed at punishing individuals involved in the child pornography business.

Res. No. 303 — Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature — Opposes attempts to weaken current laws governing obscene materials.

Res. No. 304 — Immunization Program — Reaffirms support for the fullest use of vaccines to combat communicable diseases, particularly for children.

Res. No. 305 — Violence and Vandalism in the Schools — Recommends state education agencies and local law enforcement officials develop programs aimed at reducing violence and vandalism in schools; urges Posts to assist in these efforts, and urges Congress to enact legislation to assist through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Res. No. 306 — National Family Week — Urges Congress to establish National Family Week during Thanksgiving Holiday Week as a permanent annual observance.

Res. No. 307 — School Nutrition Program — Urges Congress to fund school nutrition programs.

Res. No. 308 — Support for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention — Opposes efforts to eliminate the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and its programs due to lack of funding.

Res. No. 309 — Catastrophic Illness Among Children — Reaffirms support for federal and state governments' legislation to assist families faced with catastrophic illness of a child, and urges the inclusion of catastrophic illness in the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant program.

Res. No. 310 — Drug Trafficking — Urges Congress to fund all border state, federal and military drug trafficking prevention programs.

Res. No. 311 — Protect Children from Unrestricted Media — Supports legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity and other forms of moral depravation in movies, on television and the Internet.

Res. No. 312 — Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth — Supports programs outlined by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and urges Congress to fund these programs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Chairman Vincent M. Gaughan (Ill.)

Res. No. 1 — Change in Eligibility of Membership in The American Legion — Petitions Congress for changes in Legion membership eligibility.

ECONOMIC

Chairman Robert E. David (S.C.)

Res. No. 12 — Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, 1998 — Seeks an amendment to Public Law 105-339 to include those who served honorably for at least 179 days.

Res. No. 20 — Hire a Veteran Week — Urges institution of



The American Legion supports efforts to encourage recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

a national Hire a Veteran Week during the week of Veterans Day each year, and urges employers and other citizens to recognize and support veterans.

Res. No. 26 — Assign Local Veterans Employment Representatives — Petitions the Secretary of Labor to adhere to legal requirements of assigning Local Veterans Employment Representatives positions.

Res. No. 35 — Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA) — Seeks continuation and adequate funding of the Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act.

Res. No. 40 — Priority of Service to Veterans in All One-Stop Centers — Preserves priority of service status to veterans at one-stop centers as the Department of Labor awards them to states.

Res. No. 43 — Tax Credits for Certain Employers — Seeks legislation providing tax credits to any employer who either pays a regular salary to employees called to active duty or makes up the difference between the employee's military pay and civilian salary.

Res. No. 44 — Re-establish Adjustable Rate Mortgages for VA Loan Guaranty Program — Reaffirms support for legislation to reinstate VA's Adjustable Rate Mortgage Program.

Res. No. 49 — Home Loan Program Extended to Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and Gulf Veterans — Urges changes in the IRS Code of 1986 to further define "Qualified Veteran."

Res. No. 52 — Recognition of Military Service and Pay — Seeks legislation requiring federal agencies to take into consideration military experience and military pay history when computing an applicant's starting salary.

Res. No. 54 — TAP Training Availability — Seeks legislation to make the Transition Assistance Program permanent and require all service members to be given an opportunity to participate in the training before separation or retirement.

Res. No. 64 — Funding for Veterans' Employment and Training Service — Lobbies Congress and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service for a budget to adequately address the needs of veterans and active-duty members who receive TAP assistance and veterans who receive other assistance by the Department of Labor.

Res. No. 130 — All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program — Supports major enhancements to the current All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program, better known as the Montgomery GI Bill.

Res. No. 131 — Reinvestment of Veterans' Employment and Training Service — Supports reorganization of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service to make it more effective, efficient and responsive to veterans' needs.

Res. No. 133 — Study of Licensure and Certification Requirements — Supports efforts to eliminate employment barriers that impede the transfer of military job skills to the civilian labor market; urges the Department of Defense to ensure service members are informed about licensure or certification requirements when entering the civilian workforce.

Res. No. 142 — Preference for Veterans in Housing and Urban Development — Supports legislation to give preference to veterans and their families in obtaining housing through Department of Housing and Urban Development programs.

Res. No. 143 — Home Loan Guaranty Program — Supports raising the VA Home Loan Guaranty limit to \$227,150.

Res. No. 144 — Funding for Homeless Veterans — Renews commitment to assist homeless veterans and their families; supports public and private efforts to aid homeless veterans and their families; and seeks medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families.

Res. No. 145 – Improved Small-Business Services for America's Veteran-Entrepreneurs – Supports legislation to reauthorize and fund a VA small-business loan program for disabled, Vietnam and post-Vietnam veterans.

Res. No. 146 – Reimbursement for Correspondence and Distance Learning Courses – Supports efforts to restore the reimbursement rate for distance learning training to 90 percent of tuition.

Res. No. 148 – Employment of Veterans in Government Work Force – Opposes any attempt to degrade, dilute or modify the precedent of job eligibility preference for veterans; and opposes legislation that would reduce employment opportunities for veterans in the federal or state workforce.

Res. No. 149 – Disabled Veterans as Priority Under Americans with Disabilities Act – Urges Congress to enact legislation giving disabled veterans priority in affirmative action as a group within other designated groups for which affirmative action is required.

Res. No. 151 – Job Protection for Veterans Requiring Visits to VA Facilities – Urges state and federal legislators to adopt provisions to protect, from any employer, any veteran who is required to report to VA facilities for rehabilitation, counseling, evaluation or treatment for any service-connected condition treated by VA.

Res. No. 163 – Report Veterans' Wages at Placement – Urges state employment security agencies to voluntarily report veterans' wages at placement, and urges Congress and the Department of Labor to arrange for such reporting.

Res. No. 222 – Transfer of Veterans' Employment and Training Service to VA – Opposes legislation to transfer the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Res. No. 231 – Credit Service of Military Retirees Toward Federal Employment Benefits – Supports legislation to amend Title 5, U.S. Code, to allow military retirees entering federal service to credit all military service to accrual of annual leave.

Res. No. 251 – Revision of VETS Performance Standards – Seeks a revision of existing Veterans' Employment and Training Service reporting requirements for measuring performance standards and for determining compliance with requirements in providing employment services to veterans.

Res. No. 253 – Homestead Privilege to Veterans – Petitions Congress to open up homestead privileges to veterans on a priority basis.

Res. No. 259 – National Veterans' Training Institute – Petitions Congress to continue full funding of the National Veterans' Training Institute as required by law.

Res. No. 269 – Veterans' Hiring Preference for Federal Contractors – Urges Congress to alter the terminology of covered groups under Title 38, U.S. Code.

Res. No. 272 – Veterans' Hiring Preference from Employers with Federal Grants – Seeks to ensure that veterans receive preference from employers with grants and contracts from the federal government and preference from employers who receive funding on federally assisted projects.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Chairman William M. Bishop (Alaska)

Res. No. 2 – Relations With the Republic of China – Supports and encourages continued sales of sophisticated American weapons systems to the Republic of China (Taiwan) so that it can maintain sufficient self-defense.

Res. No. 3 – Peace and Democracy in Taiwan – Supports and encourages the democratic process in Taiwan and urges peaceful dialogue between Taiwan and China.

Res. No. 70 – Panama Canal – Establishes the belief that the United States should act to ensure the Panama Canal is operated efficiently and consistently with U.S. national security interests; seeks agreements to continue stationing U.S. forces in Panama; and encourages democratic evolution in Panama.

Res. No. 71 – Policy on Central America – Urges U.S. economic aid to friendly, democratic societies with market economies, and recommends minimal U.S. military aid in Central America.

Res. No. 72 – War on Drugs in Latin America – Urges economic assistance and continued cooperation with Latin American nations to destroy illegal drug trafficking.

Res. No. 73 – Policy on Mexico – Urges increased emphasis on Mexican-U.S. cooperation to enhance prosperity and security; urges expanded number of scholarships to Mexicans; and recommends a student exchange program between the two countries.

Res. No. 74 – Policy on Cuba – Urges maintaining control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continuing intelligence flights over Cuba, and continuing broadcasting news and information to the Cuban people.

Res. No. 76 – Enterprise for the Americas Initiative – Supports U.S. participation in Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, seeking to enhance growth and cooperation throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (except Cuba).

Res. No. 77 – Priority POW/MIA Actions – Urges the return of U.S. service members who are still Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

Res. No. 88 – Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy – Supports U.S. foreign policy objectives of maintaining peace with freedom by preserving and promoting democracy.

Res. No. 89 – United Nations – Urges U.N. reforms, including the establishment of an equitable fiduciary relationship between the United States and other U.N. countries.

Res. No. 90 – Foreign Lobbying – Calls for comprehensive hearings to ascertain the influence of foreign governments in the nation's capital, particularly financial contributions to presidential campaigns, and to correct any abuses.

Res. No. 91 – Vietnam POW/MIA Policy – Urges the administration to ensure pledges made by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam are fulfilled, and if not, to oppose further improvements of economic and political relations.

Res. No. 92 – World War II, Cold War and Korean War POW/MIAs – Urges the U.S. government to resolve the fate of unaccounted-for Americans.

Res. No. 290 – Embargo With Cuba – Urges Congress to lift the economic embargo on Cuba and allow free trade with the United States – if Cuba takes positive action toward a more open and free society.

Res. No. 316 – Policy on Balkan Deployments – Urges withdrawal of U.S. military forces deployed in the Balkans as soon as possible and encourages our European allies to shoulder more of the burden for providing security and economic rehabilitation to the region.

Res. No. 317 – Trade with the People's Republic of China – Does not support permanent normal trade relations with China or China's entry into the World Trade Organization unless China cooperates with certain policies.

Res. No. 318 – Policy on Support to the Republic of Korea – Urges reconciliation between the two Koreas, and that the U.S. and Republic of Korea governments increase contact with the North Korean government to resolve the Korean War POW/MIA issue.

Res. No. 319 – America's Future – Urges the U.S. government to adopt a bipartisan national security-foreign policy of "Democratic Activism," promoting democratic values, maintaining adequate military strength to deter or defeat aggression, cooperating with allies, encouraging free and fair trade, and assisting developing nations.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Chairman Herman G. Harrington (N.Y.)

Res. No. 313 – Appreciation to Host City – Expresses appreciation to key people involved with making the 82nd National Convention a complete success.

Res. No. 314 – Legal Immunity for Volunteers – Urges legislation to provide volunteers immunity from all suits alleging negligence in their volunteer capacity.

Res. No. 315 – Post Tax Exempt Status – Supports legislation to amend U.S. Code to allow American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion and family members of Legion members to use Post facilities without endangering the tax-exempt status of the host Post.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Chairman Allen T. Titus (Ind.)

Res. No. 53 – National Missile Defense – Urges the U.S. government to renegotiate, modify or abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and to develop and deploy a national missile defense system.

Res. No. 55 – Selective Service System Registration Program – Supports retention of the Selective Service Registration Program.

Res. No. 56 – Readiness of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps – Urges Congress to fully fund the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to maintain a high degree of readiness.

Res. No. 57 – Aerospace Production and Research – Urges Congress to commit to keeping the United States' status as the world leader in aeronautics and aircraft production, and in space exploration and research.

Res. No. 60 – Modernization of the U.S. Army – Urges Congress to fully fund the Army to maintain a full array of

options to meet the threats of the 21st century.

Res. No. 84 – Policy on the Use of Depleted Uranium – Urges the Department of Defense to require its commanders to inform their subordinates about the dangers of approaching targets that have been destroyed by depleted uranium munitions and to conduct scientific studies to determine the extent of fallout near these targets.

Res. No. 94 – Combating Potential Biological, Cyber-space and Other Threats in the 21st Century – Urges Congress to provide resources to combat potential biological, cyberspace and other threats to the United States in the 21st century.

Res. No. 95 – Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act – Supports the principal that spouses of military personnel have the right to adequate support, and that military pay should only be included on a case-by-case basis.

Res. No. 96 – Military Commissaries – Urges Congress and the Department of Defense to continue funding the military commissary system.

Res. No. 97 – Collegiate and High School ROTC Programs – Urges Congress and the Department of Defense to continue funding the collegiate ROTC programs and expand high school JROTC programs.

Res. No. 98 – Non-Federal Roles of the National Guard – Urges Congress to retain National Guard units at reasonable levels to provide assistance for civil disturbances, disasters and drug interdiction.

Res. No. 99 – Total Force Policy and Viable National Guard and Reserve Forces – Urges realistic manning, structure, equipment, training and readiness for National Guard and Reserve forces.

Res. No. 100 – Combating Crime in America – Recommends municipal, state and federal authorities take measures against repeat youthful offenders.

Res. No. 101 – Theater Missile Defense Systems – Urges Congress to fund and deploy a missile defense in high-threat theaters of operation.

Res. No. 102 – Foreign Investments in American Defense Industries – Urges the government to ensure foreign governments are not permitted to own critical U.S. defense industries; opposes the transfer and sale of sensitive U.S. technologies.

Res. No. 103 – Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base – Urges Congress to provide funding to retain our technological edge in the 21st century and to assure our military production can surge whenever U.S. military power is committed.

Res. No. 104 – U.S. Military Forces in Peacekeeping Operations – Urges the government to clearly define its vital national interests as they relate to all military operations; to have Congress approve the commitment of U.S. troops to any further peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; to not allow U.S. military forces to be placed under foreign or U.N. operational control in most cases; and to grant full POW status to service members captured during these operations.

Res. No. 105 – Anthrax Vaccination Immunization Program – Supports the continued monitoring of the Anthrax Vaccination Implementation Program, urges congressional oversight; and urges production of a newer, proven vaccine.

Res. No. 106 – Contingency Planning for Military Conscription – Urges Congress and the Selective Service System to develop contingency plans for implementing a fair and equitable conscription system as a source of military manpower.

Res. No. 108 – Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Laws – Supports the Jones Act and related maritime cabotage laws critical to America's maritime infrastructure and, therefore, national defense; supports providing commercially-operated ships on long-term charter for logistic support to Naval forces; supports proposals to move truck traffic from coastal highway and train corridors to offshore ships; and supports measures to maintain a robust U.S.-flagged Merchant Marine.

Res. No. 109 – Using Military Personnel for Experimentation Purposes – Opposes the utilization of service members for human experimentation without their knowledge or consent.

Res. No. 110 – Armed Forces Retirement Homes – Urges Congress to provide for the long-term solvency and viability of the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home and the U.S. Naval Home.

Res. No. 111 – American Battle Monuments Commission Funding – Urges Congress to provide funding and human resources to the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Res. No. 112 – Proposals to Ensure a Strong National Defense – Urges Congress to implement four specific recommendations with regard to current and future defense budgets.

Res. No. 114 – Military Recruiters in High Schools – Supports legislation to encourage high schools to allow access to military recruiters.

Res. No. 115 – Oppose Pardon for Convicted Spy Jonathan Pollard – Urges the president not to grant a pardon to convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard under any circumstances and to require him to serve his full life sentence.

Res. No. 116 – Retention of Vieques Weapons Range – Urges Congress to support the continued live-fire use of Vieques Weapons Range as vital to the readiness of U.S. naval task force groups.

Res. No. 117 – Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation – Urges Congress to fund the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay for longevity and disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

Res. No. 118 – Homosexuals Serving in the Armed Forces – Supports the former Department of Defense policy that homosexuality is incompatible with military service.

Res. No. 119 – Separate Gender Basic Training – Supports separate gender basic training and separate billeting in basic training.

Res. No. 120 – Service of Women in the Armed Forces – Supports the exclusion of military women from direct ground combat roles, including special operations units and service on submarines.

Res. No. 121 – Quality-of-Life Features – Urges Congress and the Department of Defense to fund quality-of-life features for military members such as pay, health services and cost-of-living adjustments.

Res. No. 122 – Department of Defense Health Care Reform for Military Beneficiaries – Recommends the Department of Defense adopt certain guidelines in the TRICARE health-care package for military retirees, dependents and military survivors.

Res. No. 123 – National Security Principles – Upholds specific national security principles as fundamental to the best interests of the United States.

Res. No. 124 – Military Funeral Honors for Veterans – Urges Congress to mandate and fund military honors upon request at veterans' funerals; encourages DoD to participate more in military funeral honors.

Res. No. 125 – Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) – Urges Congress to expand the F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine and the USUHS as a combined source of uniformed physicians, nurses and scientists dedicated to careers of service in the military and the Public Health Service.

Res. No. 126 – Support for the U.S. Coast Guard – Urges Congress to fund the U.S. Coast Guard budget to include deepwater initiatives.

Res. No. 162 – Support for Aeronautical Research – Urges Congress to restore full funding of the NASA budget and mandate 10 percent of NASA's budget for aeronautical research programs, to direct NASA to achieve goals announced in 1997 and to restore NASA's budget to its 1990 funding levels.

Res. No. 164 – Support for the National Space Program – Urges Congress to adopt objectives for the National Space Program in regards to management, cost, national security, exploration, launch and propulsion systems, and liaisons with other space-faring nations who share U.S. goals.

Res. No. 174 – USS Montana (SSN-777) – Requests the secretary of the Navy designate nuclear attack submarine hull number 777 as the USS Montana.

Res. No. 187 – Security of Nuclear Weapons Technology – Supports the transfer of the security of U.S. nuclear weapons technology and systems from the Department of Energy to the Department of Defense.

Res. No. 201 – Manufacturing M-16 Rifles Abroad – Calls for the review of M-16 rifle manufacturing contract to F&H Harsco and an explanation as to why a foreign arms manufacturer was selected for the contract.

Res. No. 266 – Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste – Urges Congress to compel the Department of Energy to comply with the requirements of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

Res. No. 267 – Domestic Energy and Production – Urges Congress and the Department of Energy to implement provisions of the Energy Policy Act for further development of domestic sources of energy.

Res. No. 335 – Support for the Second Amendment – Urges our nation's lawmakers to preserve the right for law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms.

Res. No. 336 – Appropriations Oversight for the Selective Service System – Urges Congress to place oversight for the Selective Service System under the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee at the start of the fiscal 2002 budget process.

Res. No. 337 – Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery – Urges Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Res. No. 338 – Support for the U.S. Air Force – Urges Congress to support the Air Force's commitment to attract, retain and train quality people and to enhance readiness through total force integration.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

Chairman Thomas P. Cadmus (Mich.)

Res. No. 50 – Policy on the State Veterans' Home Program – Supports funding for and improvements to state veterans' homes.

Res. No. 51 – Protect Disability Rating After 10 Years – Recommends amendment to Title 38, U.S. Code, to provide that disability evaluations are continuously protected after a period of 10 years.

Res. No. 58 – Special Pension for World War I Veterans – Seeks legislation to amend Title 38, U.S. Code, to authorize the VA secretary to pay each World War I veteran who meets service requirements a special pension of \$150 per month.

Res. No. 61 – Former POWs Elevated to the Priority One Eligibility Classification – Supports elevating former POWs to their rightful position of Priority One of VA's health-care eligibility system.

Res. No. 68 – Entitlement to VA Headstones – Supports entitlement for all honorably discharged veterans to an appropriate grave marker provided by VA.

Res. No. 69 – Policy on the National Cemetery Administration – Supports the establishment of additional state and national cemeteries, opposes "user fees" for burials, and supports restoration of the criteria to provide eligibility to a government-landed headstone.

Res. No. 78 – Transfer of the Fort Lyon VAMC – Urges VA to retain health-care facilities at the Fort Lyon Medical Center until an alternate site is available.

Res. No. 85 – Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C for Veterans – Encourages VA to study the issue of presumptive service connection for Hepatitis C.

Res. No. 86 – Policy on Prostate Cancer Research and Treatment – Supports funding for prostate cancer research, treatment and therapies, and urges Congress to step up its efforts to find a cure for prostate cancer.

Res. No. 141 – GI Bill of Health – Supports additional components of the GI Bill of Health, including Medicare subvention and access to VA for all veterans and dependents.

Res. No. 165 – Disability and Death Pension Program – Supports amendments to Title 38, U.S. Code, on matters concerning pension rates.

Res. No. 166 – Policy on VA-NSLI Insurance – Supports legislation to provide for the reopening of the National Service Life Insurance program for a minimum of one year for all disabled veterans within underwriting criteria.

Res. No. 167 – Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses – Encourages VA to devote resources to find medical treatments to alleviate the unexplained physical symptoms of Gulf War veterans.

Res. No. 168 – Persian Gulf War Benefits for Those Who Served in Israel and Turkey – Supports legislation to provide priority for VA to extend priority health care to veterans who served during the Persian Gulf War in Israel or Turkey.

Res. No. 176 – Policy on Former POWs – Supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection for certain ailments, and supports efforts to alleviate certain disabilities experienced by former POWs.

Res. No. 177 – Policy on Agent Orange – Urges completion of scientific study and supports liberalization of the rules relating to claims of Agent Orange exposure.

Res. No. 178 – Time Limitations for Filing Applications for Correction of Military Records – Seeks legislation to amend Title 10, U.S. Code, to eliminate all time limitations for filing applications for correction of military records.

Res. No. 192 – Health Care for World War II Veterans – Urges Congress to grant Priority Six health care to World War II veterans.

Res. No. 205 – Policy on VA Compensation – Opposes any proposal that would subject VA disability compen-

sation benefits to taxation; opposes diluting or eliminating any provision of the disability compensation program; supports legislation to provide periodic COLA and disability compensation increases; opposes automatically indexing COLA adjustments; and seeks legislation authorizing VA disability compensation to veterans having no dependents and who are in nursing homes.

Res. No. 206 – Policy on Dependency and Indemnity Compensation – Supports legislation to provide periodic COLA in DIC and seeks legislation authorizing the payment of DIC to surviving spouses who are in Medicaid-covered nursing homes.

Res. No. 207 – Accrued Benefits in a Pending Claim to the Date the Deceased Veteran's Claim Was Filed – Supports legislation to provide that, where the veteran's claim was pending at time of death, the payment for accrued benefits shall go back to the date of the original filing of the claim.

Res. No. 208 – Provide Emergency Response Service for Independent Living Veterans – Urges Congress to approve funding for VA to authorize full and partial payments of a Personal Response Service.

Res. No. 216 – Incompetent Veterans' Estate Limitations – Supports legislation to increase the incompetent veteran's estate limitation from \$1,500 and \$500 to \$4,000 and \$2,000.

Res. No. 220 – Exempt VA Benefits and Services from Pay-Go Provisions – Supports legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the "pay-go" provision of the Budget Enforcement Act.

Res. No. 224 – Funding for VA Construction Program – Urges Congress to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Program to ensure the continued provision of quality health care to veterans.

Res. No. 233 – 30-Year Delimiting Date for Agent Orange Claims – Supports the removal of the 30-year delimiting date on all veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Res. No. 236 – Presumptive Period for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) – Urges legislation to extend the current presumptive period for service connection of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) from one year to seven years from the date of active-duty separation.

Res. No. 239 – Policy on a Federal Settlement with U.S. Tobacco Companies – Urges the president and Congress to undertake a comprehensive settlement with the tobacco companies for VA benefit and medical care programs for veterans; opposes any federal agency diverting funds from VA's budget to support the federal tobacco suit.

Res. No. 240 – Disability Requirements for Nonservice-Connected Pension – Supports legislation to restore the special age consideration in determinations of entitlement to nonservice-connected pension.

Res. No. 241 – Policy on Tobacco-Related Disabilities – Supports legislation to restore entitlement to service connection for disability or death related to the veteran's use of tobacco products; supports funding to pay compensation benefits for tobacco-related illness claims.

Res. No. 249 – "WarTime" Benefits for Active Military Service Between Feb. 28, 1961, and August 5, 1964 – Urges the federal government and VA that neither should discriminate against veterans who did not serve "in country" from Feb. 28, 1961, through Aug. 5, 1964; and urges that these veterans be entitled to the same wartime benefits as those veterans who served during the Vietnam War.

Res. No. 292 – Establish Policy of Enrollment in VA Health Care System at the Time of Separation from Active Military Service – Requests that the DoD and VA establish a policy for all active-duty personnel to enroll in VA health care at the time of separation from active duty.

Res. No. 293 – VA Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research Activities – Supports funding for VA biomedical research activities, and encourages the development of research on conditions that significantly affect veterans.

Res. No. 294 – VA as an Authorized Health-Care Provider – Supports legislation to permit VA to be an authorized health-care provider under all duly licensed HMOs, PPOs and similar plans to provide reimbursement to VA for services rendered to eligible veterans.

Res. No. 295 – Extend Improvement of Compensation, Pension and Benefits to Filipino WWII Veterans – Urges legislation to extend improvement of compensation, pension and health-care benefits to Filipino World War II veterans and the increase of benefits equal to that of World War I veterans.

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George W. Bush



Al Gore



Courtesy Vice President's Office

THE MEN WHO WOULD BECOME President

Candidates respond to issues facing nation.

Important issues. Different views. Veteran support in this year's presidential election will ride on how front-runners George W. Bush and Al Gore respond to America's greatest concerns: national security, VA, flag demeritation and education.

The two candidates hail from very different backgrounds. Vice President Al Gore has served as a congressman for Tennessee's 4th Congressional District from 1976 to 1985, as a sena-

tor from 1985 to 1992 and as vice president for two terms.

Republican nominee George W. Bush is serving his second term as Texas governor, where his emphasis has been on improving the state's public schools. A graduate of Yale University and Harvard Business School, Bush served in the Texas Air National Guard as a fighter pilot before working in the energy industry and as a managing partner for the Texas Rangers baseball team.

During the 82nd National Convention in Milwaukee, The American Legion launched Veterans Vote 2000, an online straw poll designed to clarify the presidential candidates' platforms and to give them feedback from America's veterans, active-duty,

Guard and Reserve communities.

The American Legion has excerpted Bush's remarks from this year's national convention address. Vice President Gore, whose answers to the issues were taken from public record, did not address The American Legion Convention.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE:
What do you believe is the most important challenge facing our nation today, and how would you deal with it?

GEORGE W. BUSH: There is almost no relationship between our budget priorities and a long-term strategic vision of what the military ought to look like. Now is the time to shape the

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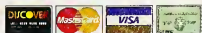
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"We owe our men and women in uniform not just military strength and readiness, but also high living standards and a high quality of life to make certain their service is not only rewarding, but well-rewarded."

future of the military with new concepts, new strategies, new resolves. As president I will begin an immediate and comprehensive review of our military.

Our forces must be able to project power over great distances and do it quickly. They must be agile and harder to find, easier to move, and lethal in action. They must have the technology to dominate information as well as the technology to dominate the skies and the seas in order to keep the peace. Whenever we commit our troops, our cause must be just, the goal must be clear and the victory must be overwhelming.

I will also end the confusion and chaos in handling top-secret nuclear information and our other most vital secrets. In my administration, America's nuclear labs will be secure again.

AL GORE: Let's invest in health care, education, a secure retirement and middle-class tax cuts.

I'm happy that the stock market has boomed and so many businesses and new enterprises have done well. This country is richer and stronger.

But my focus is on working families — people trying to make house payments and car payments, working overtime to save for college and do right by their kids.

I want you to know this: I've taken

on the powerful forces. And as president, I'll stand up to them and I'll stand up for you.

We will fight for affordable health care for all. We will move toward universal health coverage, step by step, starting with the children.

I will fight for the single-greatest commitment to education since the GI Bill — for revolutionary improvement in our schools.

We will honor hard work by raising the minimum wage so that work always pays more than welfare. We will pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Q: What would you do to enhance our nation's military readiness?

BUSH: The current administration inherited a military ready for the dangers and challenges facing our nation. The next president will inherit a military in decline.

I will rebuild the military power of the United States. Our military is the strongest in the world. It is competent, proud and willing to carry out any mission we give them. But the best intentions and the highest morale are undermined by back-to-back deployments, poor pay, shortages of spare parts and equipment, and a rapidly declining readiness.

At the start of [the current] administration, 85 percent of all combat

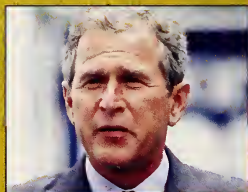
units in the Air Force were fully ready for their missions. At the start of this year, only 65 percent of the units were ready. We were reminded of these readiness problems last May when a guided missile destroyer, the USS *Decatur*, returned to port a month earlier than planned because there was not enough money for fuel.

The Pacific fleet training exercises have been cut back for the same reason. They had to wait for the next fiscal year for training. In the Atlantic fleet, maintenance has been delayed or canceled for 21 war ships.

Over the last several years the services have found it more and more difficult to retain our best people. Our men and women in uniform and their families are the foundation of American readiness. Yet in a survey last year of more than a thousand officers and enlisted personnel, more than half said they were dissatisfied and intended to leave service when their current terms of enlistment were up.

These criticisms are not of the military. They are criticisms of the current commander in chief and the vice president for not providing the necessary leadership to America. I believe a leader has the responsibility to speak out when the armed services are short on support and short on resources. Should I become your president, I will act to restore the morale of the U.S. military.

"I will keep our pledges to defend our long-standing friends and allies against aggression. But I will make it clear that we can't put troops on the ground to keep warring parties apart all around the world."



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Back of Certificate

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Tom Thoreson

"[The American Legion] and I share a commitment to our nation's symbol, our flag. We should not allow for the desecration of the American Flag."

GORE: Since World War II, there have been several build-downs that have strained America's military readiness. In contrast, the current administration's handling of the post-Cold War build-down has yielded a force that, while smaller, is more agile, more powerful and more effective at countering new strategic threats. The build-down can now be matched by a careful investment in further transforming the forces and endowing them with the cutting-edge technology they will need to succeed in their missions.

I will keep America's defenses strong. I will make sure our armed forces continue to be the best equipped, best trained and best led in the entire world. We must strengthen our partnerships with Africa, Latin America and the rest of the developing world.

Q: Our military services are experi-

encing recruiting and retention challenges. How would you address this issue, and what would you do to enhance the attractiveness of military service for active-duty personnel and their families?

BUSH: Our soldiers must have confidence that when they are asked to serve and sacrifice, the cause will be worthy and our support for them will be total.

We will act to give our forces better pay, better housing, better training. We will increase housing allowances, and I will ask Congress to increase the pay for those men and women who are in uniform by \$1 billion more than the current pay raise.

These steps will go a long way toward improving morale, but this is only a start. As commander in chief, I will give our military a clear sense of mission.

I will order an immediate review of our overseas commitments in dozens of countries. I will keep our pledges to defend our long-standing friends and allies against aggression. But I will make it clear that we can't put troops on the ground to keep warring parties apart all around the world.

I will replace uncertain missions with well-defined objectives. The mission of the U.S. military will be to be fully prepared to fight and win wars and to prevent war from happening in the first place.

An administration that has not adequately cared for our military is not well-suited to prepare it for the challenges of a new century. Should I become the president, I will use this window of opportunity to create the military for the future.

GORE: We owe our men and women in uniform not just military strength and readiness, but also high living standards and a high quality of life to make certain their service is not only rewarding, but well-rewarded.

I will fight for another military pay raise, and I will make sure we always provide the pay our service men and women deserve.

I will lead the effort to improve military housing. I will make sure that no members of our armed forces ever have to rely on food stamps.

And I will make sure we always repay our debt to those whose service is done.

Q: What would you do to improve the health-care delivery system for veterans, active-duty military, and military retirees and their families?

BUSH: I will work with Congress to raise the standard of service, not just for veterans, but for all military retirees.

In many ways the VA health-care system has worked. There are advances in medicine that have helped all Americans: the CAT scan, artificial limbs and the cure for tuberculosis.

But the system has problems today. And when these problems are neglected, military families suffer.

The General Accounting Office has documented that VA spends a million dollars a day maintaining empty hospitals wards. The VA health-care budget is stretched to the breaking point. Health care for veterans has become a complicated bureaucratic process with long delays and unfair denials in coverage. That will be changed under a



Gregory J. Cook/Corbis

"I think it's important to protect the Constitution and the flag. I think that undermining our constitutional rights in order to do something that we do other ways better is not a good idea."

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Bush presidency.

Resolving a disability claim can be an ordeal, taking an average of 205 days to complete. There is a backlog of nearly one-half million claims — one-quarter of them involving the appeals process. A veteran who appeals a decision can expect to wait close to two years. This isn't right.

If I become the president, the veterans' health-care system and the claims process will be modernized. Claims will be handled in a fair and friendly way.

First, I will return VA to the principle that it has a duty to assist veterans who seek service-related benefits. The old policy requiring VA to assist veterans with their claims has changed. In my administration, VA will act as an advocate for veterans seeking benefit claims. The VA will not act as an adversary.

Secondly, I will convene a veterans' health-care task force made up of VA officials, leaders of veterans' groups and doctors who will see that laws, such as the Veterans Millennium

Health Care Act, are being fully implemented.

GORE: I'm proud that we are reducing waiting times in our VA health system, upgrading outdated facilities and meeting veterans' health challenges such as spinal cord injuries.

Under our administration, all honorably discharged veterans in America have access to the VA health system.

We won a major increase in veterans' health: to fund more health clinics and better health care.

Now we have to ensure that all veterans treated in our VA system get the quality care they need, and if I'm entrusted with the presidency, that's exactly what I'll do.

Q: A significant number of veterans are unemployed, under-employed or homeless. What are your plans to deal with this issue?

BUSH: Wherever possible, we should put unused facilities back into service for our veterans who need assisted living. Wherever possible, we ought to use empty facilities to house homeless veterans. Our veterans deserve the nation's fullest respect and gratitude.

GORE: In spite of our strong economy, our nation's veterans continue to be a major component of the homeless population. On any given night, approximately one-third of the homeless population has served in the military. As president, I will continue to pursue positive policies that are effective in addressing the needs of homeless veterans.

Q: What is your position on passage of a constitutional amendment returning to Congress the right to pass legislation to protect the flag of the United States from physical desecration?

BUSH: [The American Legion] and I share a commitment to our nation's symbol, our flag. We should not allow for the desecration of the American Flag.

GORE: I think it's important to protect the Constitution and the flag. If anybody tried to burn an American Flag in my hometown of Carthage, Tennessee, they'd have a hard time making it out of town in one piece. I think



"We owe our men and women in uniform not just military strength and readiness, but also high living standards and a high quality of life to make certain their service is not only rewarding, but well-rewarded."

that undermining our constitutional rights in order to do something that we do other ways better is not a good idea.

Q: Our nation's future depends upon a well-educated citizenry. What would you do to improve the educational system in our nation?

BUSH: One of the things I am making as a focus of my campaign is education. Education — improving schools through higher standards, local control and stronger accountability — is the No. 1 priority.

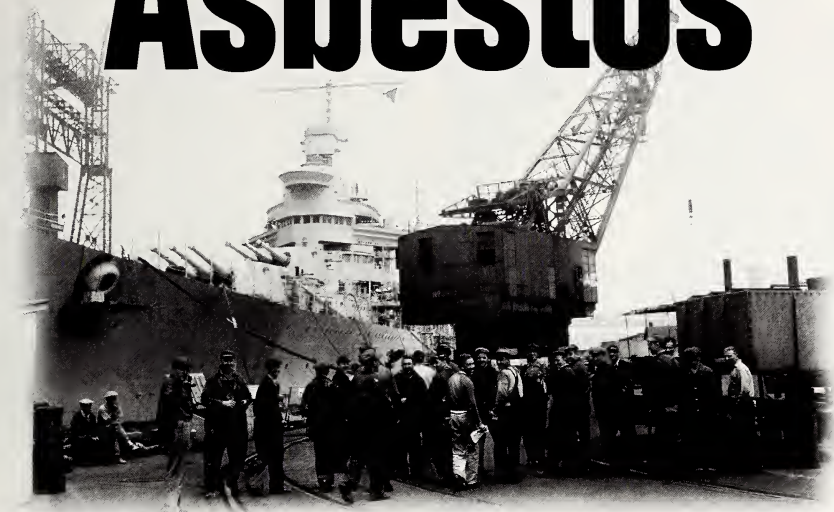
GORE: I will ensure that there is a fully qualified, well-trained teacher in every single classroom in this nation by the end of four years. My education plan invests in smaller schools and smaller classes, rebuilds and modernizes 6,000 public school buildings across America, puts computers in every classroom and uses new technology to tailor learning to each child's pace and needs.



"I will keep our pledges to defend our long-standing friends and allies against aggression. But I will make it clear that we can't put troops on the ground to keep warring parties apart all around the world."

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ROLLING TO LIFE

Ginger Rhodes won a gold medal in the Class IV Novice Field Discus with a distance of 10.59 meters. Rhodes also took home gold medals from the javelin competition and the 200- and 100-meter track events.



Wheelchair Games are good medicine for injured veterans.

By Dan Allsup

Photos by Fernando Serna

SAN ANTONIO was sizzling in 96-degree South Texas heat when nearly 600 athletes rolled into town gunning for gold on the Fourth of July. They traveled from across the United States, Great Britain and Puerto Rico to compete in the 20th National Veterans Wheelchair Games.



Russell Monroe races in the 1,500-meter track event. He won the gold medal.

Athletes competed in events such as softball, archery, air gun, bowling, wheelchair racing, slalom, basketball, table tennis, and various track and field events. And quad rugby – that's the rugged sport that spectators could locate by following a trail of paint chips and the sound of wheelchairs clashing together like midget Humvees on a testosterone high.

Dragged in. Mike Stern didn't really want to be here. Truth be told, this Legionnaire (Post 40 in Henderson, Nev.) was at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games just to keep his buddy, Danny Kaminski, company. "I had to drag him here," said Kaminski (Post 8, Las Vegas).

Heck, what was there to get excited about? After all, Stern has already been through a lot in his 59 years. He said he's a former Green Beret, a Silver Star recipient, a retired attorney and Virginia state magistrate who's been a paraplegic since his Huey was shot

down over South Vietnam in 1969.

A few days later, however, after garnering gold medals in the novice divisions of the air gun, shot put, discus and javelin events, Stern's nonchalance had been replaced with unbridled enthusiasm.

"I was pumped, man!" he said. "I'm hooked, and I'm ready for Sydney!"

It remains to be seen if Stern will qualify for the 2000 Paralympics in Australia, but his attitude reflects that of many of the competitors. More than just an annual competition of disabled athletes, the Wheelchair Games often open new doors and change attitudes.

Down But Not Out. This was the third year that Michael Quiles competed in the Games. A 45-year-old Army veteran, Quiles was representing Puerto Rico at the 1996 American Legion convention in Salt Lake City when he contracted what he thought was a common cold. It developed into Guillain-Barre disease, a fast-spreading virus that left him paralyzed.

Quiles, a hulking, bearded Army veteran with massive shoulders and a penchant for red bandanas and gold earrings, glistened with hard-earned sweat after repeatedly clanging a 3-pound discus off the distant bleachers at Northside Stadium. His best effort, a heave of 34.79 meters, was good enough for the gold. He also won his division in the shot put, weightlifting and javelin. Quiles explained what the competition means to him.

"When I became ill, I was so depressed that I thought my life was over," he said. "My physical therapist suggested that I think about participating, and I told her, 'Go to hell! Leave me alone; I'm sick.' But she stayed after me, and after I left the hospital I thought about it and started practicing. It changed my entire life. I feel alive again."

Getting stoked. Legionnaire Rich Fowler, chaplain of Post 261 in Piscataway, N.J., said that Quiles' attitude adjustment is common. A Marine veteran, Fowler has been para-

lyzed from the waist down since a 1989 car accident.

"I've seen a lot of disabled vets so lethargic that they do nothing for years. Then someone gets them involved in this competition and suddenly they find themselves coming alive again," Fowler said. "I've seen guys do a complete about-face and return to work full time after competing."

"I really think this is a direct result of participating in these Games. Before, they were satisfied sitting around and watching the mail for that monthly disability check. Now, they have something to live for. Their eyes have been opened to what they can really accomplish."

Largest Wheelchair Games. Sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, this is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the nation. Its goal is to improve the quality of life for veterans with dis-



batters, such as Nathaniel McFarland, used one hand to hold on to their wheelchairs as they swung the bat with the other. Then they wheeled their way to first base to attempt to beat out the throw.

"After 20 years, I know this is the best pill ever issued by the Veterans Administration never approved by FDA."

– Tony Barriga

"I've seen a lot of disabled vets so lethargic that they do nothing for years. Then someone gets them involved in this competition and suddenly they find themselves."

— Rich Fowler



Joe Hogans, of Newville, Ala., won a gold medal in the Class IV Masters Archery competition.

abilities and to foster better health through sports.

According to Tony Barriga, that goal is being met. He's been involved with the competition since its inception in 1981.

"When we first started the Games, a lot of big shots in Washington thought it was just a big waste of taxpayers' money," he said. "But take it from me, after 20 years I know this is the best pill ever issued by the VA never approved by the FDA.

"There are a lot of empty beds in VA hospitals because of these Games," Barriga continued. "A person has to move his body to stay healthy. You can't lie in bed all day and be healthy,

Wheelchair games sprang from hospital gym hoops

The National Wheelchair Games originated after World War II, when young disabled veterans began shooting hoops from their wheelchairs in Veterans Administration hospitals.

The first organized competition was held in Richmond, Va., in 1981. Seventy-four athletes from 14 states competed that year, and an annual competition was born. Today, it's the country's largest annual wheelchair athletic competition.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the competition is open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injury, certain neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments.

Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo West said the competition is the first exposure to wheelchair sports for many injured veterans.

"Recreational and sports activities play an important role in the rehabilitation of veterans in VA medical facilities nationwide," West said. "These Games demonstrate VA's commitment not only to heal the wounds of veterans but also to ensure that they enjoy a high quality of life."

Although the Games originated with basketball, the competition has evolved into about 17 different sports. One of the more popular—and practical—events is the slalom. Moving forward and backward in their wheelchairs, more than 200 competitors weave through a complex series of ramps, doors and stairs that represent everyday obstacles. Scoring is based on a competitor's time and accuracy while maneuvering the course.

The slalom attracted a raucous crowd of spectators who ringed the course, wildly cheering all the athletes. Most were fellow competi-

"These Games demonstrate VA's commitment not only to heal the wounds of veterans but also to ensure that they enjoy a high quality of life."

— Togo West,
Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs



George Norton, from Fairhaven, Mass., lets the ball fly during the basketball competition.

tors. This was an event they could all relate to.

"Camaraderie is a very important part of this competition for all of us," said Charles Hughes. A Marine veteran paralyzed by shrapnel in Vietnam, Hughes added, "This competition motivates us. We're doing things we never thought we'd do again."

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Orlando Perez retrieves a grounder during softball competition. Although his team did not place, Perez went home with a gold medal in Open Weightlifting and a bronze from the Open Slalom.

"These Games give us a chance to show we still got it. And believe me, I still got it."

— Charles Allen

and that's what a lot of these guys were doing — lying in VA hospital beds and not getting any exercise. This is the best medicine ever to come across the board, and it doesn't cost the taxpayers a dime."

But are the Games true competition, or is it just a little feel-good time for folks who can't do much else? You don't want to ask Charles Allen that question.

Allen, 28, was a lean, 6-foot-4-inch power forward for his Dallas high school basketball team before he joined the Army. In June 1994, a stray bullet on a Fort Benning, Ga., firing range paralyzed him from the waist down. This is his third Wheelchair Games. During the softball competition, his competitiveness was contagious as he exhorted his teammates and argued with the umpire (Allen lost) while covering an amazing amount of asphalt on defense. It's clear that this young veteran is not merely a former athlete — he's a jock who just happens to be



Michael Quiles, a member of the Puerto Rican contingent of the Paralyzed Veterans of America and a Legionnaire, recorded a distance of 11.24 meters to take home the gold in his category of the shot-put competition.

strapped in a wheelchair.

"We're not out here screwing around," Allen stressed. "This is serious stuff. I just love the competition. It gives me a charge to get out here and show my stuff again. These Games are just great — they give us a chance to

show that we still got it. And believe me, I still got it." □

Dan Allsup is a freelance writer who lives in suburban St. Louis.

Article Design: Holly K. Soria

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An Islamic Jihad supporter waves a burning U.S. flag in a refugee camp on the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip earlier this year during a rally to mark the assassination of a fellow Jihad member. AP photo

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Like the 1920s and '30s, our policy of appeasement may be courting war.

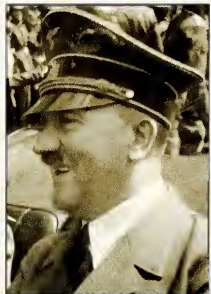
By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

Yogi Berra's funny line "It's déjà vu all over again" seems to be taking on a potentially deadly seriousness as one compares the period we are now living in with what we refer to as the "Inter-war Era." Such a comparison suggests that — like the 1920s and '30s — our own time may be something other than an open-ended period of rela-

tive global peace and prosperity in the wake of the "war to end all wars."

Indeed, if we are not careful, we may find our own era book-ended by another large, if not global, conflagration. This is an especially ominous prospect since the nature of military technology today is such that the devastation wrought could make all that preceded it, including the horrible second World War, pale by comparison. All of us who wish to spare our nation and people such a terrible prospect have a responsibility to consider the unsettling parallels between these two periods

— parallels that suggest that we may be re-creating conditions that conduce to widespread war.



Despite the ominous implications of Hitler's "Mein Kampf," the West failed to perceive the fuhrer's evil intent.

Caveats. Two caveats are in order at the outset: First, as we consider the lessons of the last inter-war period, we must bear in mind the fact that human history does not, as a general rule, repeat itself exactly. It would make the job of avoiding established mistakes easier if it were otherwise. Still, there are trends or patterns of behavior that recur even though they may, and usually do, differ in some particulars. We ignore the more ominous of these

"Today the United States is studiously ignoring what China says about us when it routinely describes us as the 'main enemy.'"

recurring trends or patterns at our peril.

Second, few things are genuinely preordained. In hindsight, we can see that usually the course of history is the result of choices – choices that we make in our individual lives and choices that are made in the lives of nations. The problem is that when we are in the midst of them, we are often unaware that we are making such choices, let alone how momentous they will prove to be.

Ominous Parallels. The following are among the more worrying similarities between our time and the last inter-war period:

■ **Lack of a Perceived Threat:** With the advantage of hindsight, we think of Hitler and the Japanese imperialists as obvious menaces. We find it incredible that people of the day failed to perceive them as such, or to understand their malevolent intentions.

The problem is that the true intentions of such actors are often obscured by what the intelligence community calls "noise": information – some of it genuine, some of it disinformation – that lends credence to the most benign of assessments.

Today, in the so-called "post-Cold War world" – or perhaps more accurately the "post-post-Cold War world" – we are told that there are no serious threats to America's role as the world's last superpower. Much stress is placed on the signs that potential adversaries are undergoing leadership and/or policy changes, discounting the likelihood they will, in fact, emerge as foes.

For example, we are told that Vladimir Putin, the KGB thug now running Russia, likes German culture. North Korea's Kim Jong Il turns out to be charming and therefore must not be the despotic tyrant he has appeared to be. And the son and successor to Syria's dictator, Hafez Assad, was trained as an ophthalmologist in Europe and likes computers. Therefore, we are assured, he will want to move his country toward the West. The problem is that it ain't necessarily so.

■ **Cognitive Dissonance:** The difficulty inherent in accurately assessing threats is greatly exacerbated by a phenomenon psychologists call "cognitive dissonance." In layman's terms, this might be

defined as an inability to see what you don't want to see. Even when another nation is fairly explicit about its hostile intentions, the implications are often too ominous to contemplate. Therefore, some people, including leaders of Western nations, simply choose not to do so.

A particularly appalling manifestation of this syndrome is the refusal to give due weight to what potential adversaries are saying, not for *our* consumption, but to their own people.

In the 1930s, the West ignored and/or discounted the clear meaning of Hitler's "Mein Kampf." Today, the United States is studiously ignoring what China says about us when it routinely describes us as the "main enemy." We discount what Yasser Arafat means when he summons the Palestinian people to "jihad" (holy war) and uses official maps of "Palestine" that comprise all the land of Israel, as well as the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We find it inconvenient and unworthy of note that Kim Jong Il failed to tell his people about the summit with his South Korean counterpart, which has been so widely touted in the West as a breakthrough in relations with his totalitarian state.

■ **Unwelcome Prophets:** Compounding the problem created by the failure or inability to perceive correctly emerging dangers is the often considerable hostility applied to those who offer a different, less Pollyanna-ish forecast. In the 1930s, Winston Churchill was almost completely isolated and deemed a pariah. His warnings were ridiculed and ignored until it was nearly too late.

Today, those ex-

pressing similar concerns about trouble ahead are, fortunately, more numerous. Yet they, too, are frequently dismissed as out of touch with reality and as unreconstructed "Cold Warriors" who are looking for an enemy in order to foster support for military programs and capabilities that are not otherwise justified.

■ **Engagement:** During inter-war periods, it seems the preferred response to potential adversaries is "engagement," usually manifested in the self-serving conviction that trade with them will mitigate, if not completely prevent, the possibilities for conflict.

In the 1930s, the practitioners of such an approach in Britain were Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain. They were adored by their publics for their widely acclaimed appeasement policies of engagement toward Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's Fascists. It is worth noting that England



The U.S. has long been a target for international terrorism despite its continued peacekeeping efforts. U.S. Marines, aided by Lebanese rescue workers and Italian troops, search for American peacekeepers buried under debris when their command post was bombed by terrorists in 1983.



The ghost of Chamberlain haunts us today. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, left, widely acclaimed for his appeasement efforts with the Nazis, smiled broadly at a German Army officer when he arrived at Berchtesgaden, Germany,

to meet with Hitler concerning the Munich Pact. When Chamberlain returned to Britain, he proclaimed, "I believe it is peace for our time." With his back to the camera is German Foreign Minister Joachim Von Ribbentrop.

was Germany's largest trading partner in the 1930s.

Currently, one of the leading architects of President Clinton's policies is the head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, Morton Halperin. He was once heard to declare ruefully: "It's too bad Hitler gave appeasement such a bad name." In fact, despite the sorry experience with this sort of "engagement," the Clinton team appears determined to pursue policies of appeasement in the form of normalized trade and political relations with virtually every bad actor on the planet, relying on "globalization" to eliminate dangerous differences between nation states.

Thus, the United States is currently rewarding ominous behavior on the part of Russia and China (notably their systematic proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles) with trade and strategic concessions (for example, making the former a member of the so-called "G-8" and adopting the latter's party line concerning Taiwan).

Then there are what the State Department used to call "rogue states" — nations, by the way, that the Russians and Chinese call "clients." As part of the strategy of "engaging" with them, the Clinton-Gore administration now insists on using the less judgmental term "states

of concern."

This is a euphemism intended to make it easier to justify policies of appeasement toward the likes of North Korea, Iran, Cuba, Libya, Vietnam, Syria, the PLO, Sudan and even Iraq. These policies are taking the form of trade agreements, improved political contacts, "cooperation" on drug trafficking, intelligence sharing, etc. In some cases, it requires dropping them from the list of "state sponsors of terrorism" (e.g., Pakistan), a practice of politicization roundly and properly condemned by the recent congressionally chartered commission on terrorism.

■ **Undue Reliance on Diplomacy:** Unjustified credibility is imputed to "peace processes" and arms control agreements, despite abundant evidence that they are not worth the paper they are written on. In the 1920s and '30s, successive agreements were reached. These memorably included the Kellogg-Briand Pact that banned all wars and various deals concluded with Hitler. The pact culminated in the infamous Munich agreement which Chamberlain fatuously announced would assure "peace for our time."

Today, we have negotiations involving everything from the creation of a Palestinian state (that it is inconceivable

will represent the last demands of the Arabs against Israel and will, to the contrary, be a catalyst for renewed conflict in the Middle East); to talks with the North Koreans whereby they are demanding billions in protection money to give up their ballistic missile programs — something they will never actually do; to efforts to negotiate limits on space arms, missile defenses and the verification of a ban on biological weapons that will seriously disserve U.S. interests.

■ **Hollow Militaries:** In times of peace, democracies typically fail to provide for their armed forces. This can create vacuums of power that others are tempted to fill.

Before Pearl Harbor, less than 3 percent of the United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was spent on the military. As a result, we were training troops with broomsticks. England largely disarmed. France relied upon the Maginot Line. And the totalitarians' build-ups went unmatched and unaddressed in meaningful ways.

For more than a decade now, the United States has been cashing in the so-called "peace dividend." We are today spending less on the military as a percentage of GDP than we did before Pearl Harbor. We have gutted our armed forces

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A payload launch vehicle carrying a prototype interceptor is launched from Meck Island on Jan. 18, 2000. It failed to intercept the target vehicle, a modified Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile. The U.S. will eventually deploy an effective anti-missile system. The question is: Will we deploy it before or after we are attacked with a weapon of mass destruction?

by compelling them to perform expensive peacekeeping and other humanitarian functions at unsustainably high operational tempos, even as their force structure was being dramatically reduced.

Investment for modernization and sustaining the present force has been deferred for too long. And social experimentation has contributed to the demoralization of the military and its present acute difficulties recruiting and retaining the capable people it needs.

■ **Failure to Defend Our People:** An especially eerie parallel is the belief that it is ill advised, or at least unnecessary, to deploy measures to protect our people against emerging threats.

Churchill fought strenuously to secure the funds needed to perfect and deploy what was then a highly exotic and expensive secret technology – radar – in response to the immense build-up of long-range bomber aircraft he saw taking place in Germany. Thanks largely to his tireless efforts, early, imperfect versions of radar became available in time, but just barely. Had they not, the Battle of Britain might well have come out very differently.

Today, of course, we are convulsed with a debate about whether the United States should proceed with the deployment of anti-missile defenses in the face of arguments that the threat has yet to emerge (never mind that senior Chinese officials have recently repeated earlier threats to engage in nuclear war with the

United States over Taiwan); that the technology is imperfect; and that the Russians, Chinese and some of our allies do not want us to have such a capability.

The truth of the matter is that the United States will deploy an effective anti-missile system. That is really no longer in question. The question that does remain, however, is: Will we deploy it before we need it? Or will we wait to do so until after someplace we care about – perhaps somewhere in the United States or, if we are lucky, in someone else's country – is attacked with a deadly ballistic missile-delivered weapon of mass destruction?

What Should We Do? It is important to reiterate that while these inter-war patterns are in evidence at the moment – if only we have the wit and the will to recognize them – there is nothing foreordained about their translating into a new major global conflict. But these patterns suggest that, if we are to avoid that fate, we are going to have to understand that we are making choices and do a better job of selecting our preferred options. The following principles should guide these choices:

First, we must be realistic and honest about the character of the regimes with whom we must interact. To the extent they are engaged in hostile behavior or encouraging their peoples to view us or our interests in a hostile manner, we should be prepared both to resist them

militarily, if necessary, and work to bring about structural changes within their political systems that should mitigate such a danger.

Second, we must reinvest in our military might, recapitalizing the force and ensuring that those who serve in uniform have the wherewithal they need to train, fight and prevail in combat. This should translate into a national commitment to provide at least 4 percent of GDP on a sustained basis to provide for America's armed forces. A particularly crucial ingredient of such expenditures should be the construction and deployment, as soon as possible, of effective missile defenses for the protection of both the American people and their forces and allies overseas. This can be done most quickly, most effectively and least expensively from the sea, by adapting the Navy's AEGIS fleet air defense system to make it a ballistic missile-killer.

And third, we must restore and strengthen our alliances with fellow democracies – what might be called “democratic engagement.” This requires confident and reliable American leadership, backed by credible military power and presence.

We must end the odious practice of deliberately weakening our allies (notably Israel and Taiwan) and demeaning them in the interest of currying favor with their foes (for example, by insulting Japan, South Korea and Taiwan in the course of the president's last visit to China by refusing to stop at any one of these allied nations en route either to, or from, the mainland).

Election 2000 offers our nation a once-every-four-years opportunity to understand the choices before us and to act on them in an informed and deliberate fashion. Candidates for president and for the Congress must be encouraged, indeed compelled, to address these issues – and to state clearly their views with respect to them. By so doing, we can ensure that the *right* choices are made and, with luck, the danger of a new cataclysm avoided. □



Frank J. Gaffney Jr. formerly served in senior positions in the Defense Department. Today he is president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington, D.C.

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**By Dan Allsup
Photos by Tom Stratman**

Alton, Ill., is best known for its colorful casino riverboat and for being the home of Robert Wadlow, the tallest person to ever walk the face of the earth, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

But Alton was all hot dogs, pretzels, peanuts and soda pop Aug. 22. It was home to a raucous standing-room-only crowd, a high school choir singing the "National Anthem" and the public address announcer playing a merrily off-key rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." On a kazoo.

It was old-fashioned baseball on a steamy late-summer night in the Mississippi River town. It was the night that Alton hosted a duel between the two best youth baseball teams in the country, facing off for the 75th playing of The American Legion World Series championship game. Who could ask for anything more?

The 2000 baseball season started with



The Danville Hoots pluck some good luck from "Hoody," their owl mascot, before the final game of The American Legion World Series Aug. 22.

about 5,200 American Legion teams and it ended when the Danville (Post 246, Calif.) Hoots eked out an exciting 2-1 victory over the Paducah (Post 31, Ky.) Chiefs. Danville finished the season with a sparkling 59-9 record, while Paducah closed at 52-8. The championship game attracted 3,225 fans to Lloyd Hopkins Field, which added to a five-day total attendance of 13,371.

Paducah drew first blood in the second inning of the championship finale,

courtesy of two Danville errors. Third baseman Ross Dougherty, who had reached second base on an errant throw to first by shortstop Adam Ricks, scored when right fielder Brian Groman misjudged a fly ball for the Hoots' second error of the inning.

Danville evened the score in the bottom half of the second when first baseman Ryan Lymangrover, who had reached base after being hit by a pitch, scored on a double by catcher Tim

Gilhooly. The Hoots broke the 1-1 tie in the fifth when Kevin Flaherty led off with a single, advanced to second on a sacrifice by third baseman Dane Dobrinich and scored the eventual winning run when Ricks made up for his earlier throwing error by driving a curve ball into left field.

Danville hurler Matt Brown (10-1) tossed a three-hitter and garnered 11 strikeouts in a pitching duel with the Chiefs' Doug Harris. Brown struck out 19 and allowed one unearned run in his 17 innings of work in the World Series. He joined seven other Chiefs and Hoots named to the all-tournament team.

"[Winning the championship] is a great feeling," Brown said. "This group of guys has such a great feeling of what we've accomplished. Everybody stayed together throughout the whole process, and it feels great to be here now." It was the last time this Hoots team will take the field together because every senior on the roster has accepted a college scholarship. Brown will take the mound for the University of California at Berkeley.

"This was the best game of the series, and that's the way it was supposed to be," said Paducah manager Clarence Adams. "This wasn't a loss; this was just one helluva ballgame. I'm so proud of my kids."

Still dripping from the obligatory Gatorade shower, Danville manager Don Johns said, "We've been on the road for a couple weeks, and we're happy to be going home as the champions of American Legion baseball. We're very proud of that."

Johns said he's been involved with American Legion baseball as a player and a coach for more than 30 years. This was his second trip to the World Series. In 1998, Johns' Danville club lost in the semi-finals in Las Vegas.



Danville's Matt Brown engaged in a pitching duel with Chiefs' Doug Harris. Brown pitched 17 innings with no earned runs, capturing the MVP award.

Outstanding World Series Awards

Players and team leaders were recognized for their outstanding playing abilities at the 2000 American Legion World Series.

James F. Daniel Jr. Memorial Award

Matt Brown of Danville, Calif., earned **Most Valuable Player** for pitching 17 innings with no earned runs and picking up two wins including the championship series.

Louisville Slugger Award

Matt Ryan of Brooklawn, N.J., slugged 20 hits in his 37 at-bats, a .541 batting average, which was the **Highest Batting Average** for this year's ALWS.

Rawlings Big Stick Award Most Total Bases

Al Smith (Omaha, Neb.), Mark Michael (Brooklawn, N.J.) and Ryan Lymangrover (Danville, Calif.) tied with 31.

Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Award

Al Smith of Omaha, Neb., hit the **Most RBIs** with a total of 22.

Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award

Don Johns, John McGough, John Rodrigues, Pat Evans and Andy Faria, all of Danville, Calif., walked away with coaches' leadership awards.

Bob Feller Pitching Award

Ben Thurmond of Columbia, S.C., tossed 47 strikeouts, winning the **Most Strikeouts Award**.

Note: At age 16, centerfielder Al Smith of the Omaha, Neb., team is one of the youngest ever to earn an American Legion batting championship award. Nearly 90 percent of Legion ballplayers are age 17 to 18. Smith earned two awards: the Rawlings Big Stick Award and the Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Award.

"The American Legion has been wonderful," he said. "The Legion teaches these kids so many things about the flag and freedom and about respect for the competition. They go to a lot of trouble and expense to conduct this tournament. We're very proud to be American Legion national champions — this is something that these kids will have the rest of their lives."

Last year, the Legion spent an estimated \$1 million on transportation, meals and lodging for the 1,400 players who compete in the eight Regional and National Championship tournaments. The purpose is the same as it was in 1925: "An investment in America's youth."

American Legion baseball is a known proving ground for future professional baseball players. Since the first competition in 1926, more than 10 million youngsters have played Legion baseball. About 75 percent of today's college players are former Legion players, and then-National Commander Al Lance estimated that about 61 percent of the Major League rosters are filled with one-time Legion players. More than 40 have reached the game's highest altar — the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N. Y. Former Legion players recently named to the Hall are Carlton Fisk and Sparky Anderson in 2000, and George

Brett and Robin Yount in 1999.

Tom Seaver, elected to the Hall of Fame in 1991, described in the World Series program book what Legion ball meant to him: "My American Legion baseball experience was an important step

toward the dream of one day playing major league baseball. Not only were my summers in Fresno, Calif., filled with baseball, but some of the friendships I made playing American Legion have lasted nearly 40 years."

Brooks Robinson, one of the slickest fielding third basemen of all time, agreed. "American Legion baseball was a springboard for me into profes-

sional baseball," the Baltimore Oriole great wrote. "I made more progress in Legion baseball than any other phase of my young baseball career." Robinson entered the Hall in 1983.

The 2001 American Legion World Series will be played in Yakima, Wash., and the Paducah youngsters already have the dates marked on their calendars. With about a dozen players returning to the field next year, the Chiefs are planning a return trip. □

Dan Allsup is a freelance writer who lives in suburban St. Louis.

Article Design: Holly K. Soria



Defeat manifested itself on the face of Chiefs batboy Adam Carrico as his team fell prey to the Hoots.



Eager hands grasp the winners' trophy as National Americanism and Youth Chairman Joe Caouette congratulates the Danville Hoots for their triumph over the Paducah Chiefs at The American Legion World Series.



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If we publish your account, we will pay you \$150. Send all materials by Nov. 30, 2000, to:

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GIs in UN court trials?

The United Nations is planning a Nov. 27 meeting to establish an International Criminal Court, a tribunal that could prosecute U.S. service members for "war crimes." Although George W. Bush and Al Gore both oppose the ICC treaty, the court could go into operation without U.S. approval and exercise jurisdiction over American citizens.

The Clinton administration's ambassador for war crimes issues, David Scheffer, has agreed to participate in the U.N. meeting, hoping to negotiate a better treaty.

A DoD memorandum warns that the ICC could be "politicized" and could subject U.S. troops to "arbitrary or frivolous charges."

Military pork criticized

The good news is that the fiscal 2001 Defense Appropriations Act provides service members a 3.7-percent pay raise, effective Jan. 1. The defense budget is up to \$288 billion, an increase of \$18 billion over the year before. The bad news is that Congress is still being criticized for putting too much pork into defense bills.

Despite rising concern over military readiness, Alise Valene Frye of Taxpayers for Common Sense said Congress cut \$450 million from military readiness accounts and added \$7 billion in extra projects not requested by the Department of Defense. One was \$8.5 million for an alcoholism research center named after wine king Ernest Gallo. Other projects funded out of the defense bill included a half-million dollars for aviation training at a Florida college, a study of reef damage in Florida and prostate cancer research.

WTO: friend or foe?

From the left and right, Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan opposed the World Trade Organization on the grounds that it destroys sovereignty and can order changes in U.S. laws.

But testimony from the General Accounting Office suggested the United States has gained more than it has lost from WTO decisions. Out of 42 cases involving the United States as a plaintiff or defendant, America has won 14 and lost 8, with the remaining cases being decided through negotiations and without a ruling.



Mexican President Vicente Fox has called for an open border between the United States and Mexico to create a North American community.

Mexican President Fox calls for open border

Immigration didn't surface as a big election issue between George W. Bush and Al Gore, but new Mexican President Vicente Fox's call for an open border between the United States and Mexico has brought it to the front burner. Fox, who has said the two countries should be integrated into a North American community, like the European Union, wants Congress to end its annual "certification" of foreign governments' drug-interdiction efforts.

Observers are skeptical. "Immigration politics in the United States have plainly changed since the mid-1990s, but not enough to embrace an open border with Mexico," noted David R. Ayon of Loyola Marymount University.

One obvious problem is that a free flow of labor, products and services could also mean more drugs from Mexico. U.S. law-enforcement officials said seizures of cocaine and marijuana along the Mexican border, where 70 percent of all illegal drugs enter the country, have escalated dramatically in the past two years.

Fox also favors a U.S. amnesty for illegal aliens here.

Making his own gesture, President Clinton has issued an executive order making federal programs and benefits more available to "persons with limited English proficiency."

Jim Boulet, of the group English First, commented, "We are now officially multilingual."

— C. K.

Scouts prevail in House

A small group of liberal congressmen tried last month to revoke the Boy Scouts' federal charter because of the group's exclusion of homosexuals. The primary sponsor of the bill (HR 4892) is Rep. Lynn Woosley (D-CA). Republicans quickly condemned the legislation and its leftist backers.

"Election year pandering on an issue so radical and anti-American is an insult to families, Scouts and the coun-

try," said Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma.

"I scheduled this bill to demonstrate the lack of support for those who have declared open season on the Boy Scouts," said House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX).

The House came down solidly behind the Boys Scouts September 13, with a 362-12 vote to reject the proposal to revoke their eight-decade-old federal charter because of the scouting organization's policy of excluding gays.

— Cliff Kincaid

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Innovation stokes recruitment



NBC affiliate news anchor and Legionnaire Jack Martin implores Legionnaires to teach another generation about the values that make America great.

Nearly 500 Legionnaires poured into Indianapolis in July for the 37th Annual National Membership Workshop, a three-day conference focusing on the challenges and opportunities of recruitment. Workshop speakers and facilitators pulled no punches during the conference, offering sometimes-blunt assessments of the Legion's membership woes.

National Commander Ray Smith, leading candidate for his position at the time, said he was concerned about the membership decline – 11 percent over the past seven years. "I'm dedicating myself to stopping this slide," Smith said.

Ric Santos, a consultant to the Legislative Affairs Commission, declared, "While membership is everyone's task ... it rests heaviest upon the shoulders of the Department Commanders."

Everyone agreed a potential exists for membership growth with a veritable gold mine of 21.6 million eligible veterans.

National Adjutant Robert Spanogle, who attributed membership problems to the Legion's low public visibility, outlined the Legion's ambitious plan to tap into the reservoir of would-be members, including community-service programs, media outreach, the Legion College, the Reconnect Program linking veterans with active-duty personnel, the creation of new Posts and the use of new technologies to improve the Legion's visibility and image.

From the Front Lines.
William Denny, a Dis-

trict Commander from Pennsylvania, talked about a ground-breaking outreach program based in Philadelphia that encourages young people to stay on the right side of the law. In association with school districts, law enforcement agencies and the courts, Legion Posts show at-risk youth where crime leads – the city's jails. Incorporating police and sheriff's departments, the court system and school districts into the program netted a 36-percent growth in Philadelphia's Legion membership.

Glenn Brault, a Legionnaire and Air Force reservist from Massachusetts, discussed the importance of the Reconnect Program in this era of long-term deployments. "The Reconnect Program is about getting involved in the lives of military units," Brault explained.

Noting that some 960,000 reservists are eligible for Legion membership, Brault urged his audience to reach out to base commanders, active-duty troops and reservists.

No one grabbed attention quite like Post 249 in Memphis, Tenn. "Elvis," aka Terry Adams, kicked off his remarks with a couple of classic tunes and a few trademark gyrations.

Many volunteer civic programs helped Post 249's membership explode from 54 to 272 in just one year, but none had the impact of two little words in front of the Post number: Elvis Presley.

Adams used the example of the Elvis Presley Post to underscore his overall theme of innovation. "Make use of the things that worked in the past," implored Adams. "But also try new methods."

Adams explained that three basic elements – hard work, solid community service and good public relations – helped rebuild Post 249. But he said the No. 1 reason veterans weren't joining was that they weren't asked.



The King makes a surprise appearance, drawing attention to the new Post in Memphis which has chosen Elvis as its namesake.

Elections could decide flag amendment fate

Although the U.S. Senate narrowly rejected the bipartisan flag-protection amendment in March, members of The American Legion and Citizens Flag Alliance are optimistic that this year's elections could bring the needed votes to protect Old Glory.

The bill, Senate Joint Resolution 14, fell just four votes short of the needed two-thirds majority when the Senate voted on the measure. A recent survey by the Citizens Flag Alliance, however, continues to show strong support for the amendment by candidates who stand a good chance of winning.

In a closely watched Senate race, Rep. Rick Lazio, a long-time supporter of the amendment, is neck-and-neck in his bid against first lady Hillary Clinton, according to most polls. Clinton refused to answer the CFA survey and voiced opposition to the amendment during a campaign appearance earlier this year. The winner will replace Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who opposed the amendment.

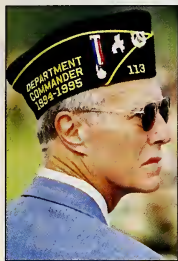
Two other opponents, Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., and Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., are retiring. The Democratic and Republican candidates vying for Kerrey's seat support the amendment, as do the two candidates hoping to replace Bryan.

Former Virginia Governor George Allen is mounting a tough challenge against Sen. Chuck Robb, an outspoken opponent of the amendment. Allen, a Republican, strongly supports flag protection, making it an issue in his campaign.

In Georgia, Sen. Zell Miller, a Democrat, was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the death of Republican Sen. Paul Coverdale. Miller faces Mack Mattingly in a special election to finish the remaining four years. Both candidates support the flag amendment.

If all current incumbent supporters are re-elected, potential gains from open seats and challengers would produce a supermajority vote.

Legion Reconnecting with today's military



Past Department Commander Billy Hobbs watches the Camp Challenge graduation ceremonies at Fort Knox, Ky.

and fatigues for what many say is the toughest thing they have ever done.

The nearly 200 cadets who completed this summer's Camp Challenge were greeted by Legionnaires who came to honor the young student-soldiers with words of encouragement.

During graduation ceremonies, Kentucky Department Vice Commander John Foster and Past Department Commander Billy Hobbs presented The American Legion Patriotic Performance Award to Cadet Antonio Coffey, who demonstrated superior leadership, comradeship and teamwork. Coffey attends the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Miss. The Legion presents the award to one outstanding cadet from each of seven camps at Fort Knox.

The award presentation and recruitment efforts are outgrowths of the Reconnect Program, a joint effort between the Defense Department and The American Legion to anchor the military to the communities it defends.

"Camp Challenge" — a place where young ROTC cadets begin the long march toward becoming officers — is aptly named. For five weeks, cadets from across the country trade in their backpacks and books for rucksacks



Camp Challenge cadets present the colors at the opening of graduation ceremonies.



Department Vice Commander John Foster shows his support for the DoD-American Legion Reconnect Program.

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This month we have listed many groups that are planning reunions. Information is provided free to Legion members and other veterans who write VETS and enclose the 5-digit VETS number of each reunion. VETS maintains reunion and contact information for more than 12,000 outfits. Reunion information is also available at no charge on the Internet at www.vets.org. Many libraries and schools will provide Internet access free for veterans with no Internet access or computer skills. We regret that due to call volume we cannot accept phone requests for reunion information. See "How to Use VETS Services" below.

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Any U.S. Marine who served aboard the USS *Boston* CAC 1 on the motor launch crew while stationed at Rhodes, Greece in July 1958 and can verify a number of injuries Harry John Rose received while assisting Marines loading from shore for their return, contact Dept. of Florida service officer Tim Ivers, P.O. Box 31003, St. Petersburg, FL 33731.

IN SEARCH OF

Anyone who served in the 14th Engineer Combat Battalion during the Korean War, contact Stanley H. Schwartz, 313 Hollow Creek Road, Mount Sterling, KY 40353 or call 859-498-4567 or email shs313@mis.net.

Anyone who served in GHQ SWPA, later known as GHQ AFPOC, motor between Brisbane, Australia, and Tokyo, Japan, contact Donald E. Lund, 82 W. 300 N, North Salt Lake, Utah.

Anyone who served in the 625th FA Bn. HQ Battery, 40th Inf. Div. in Korea between 1951 and 1953, contact James Mehaffey, 4 Vantassel

Dr., Lindale, GA 30147 or call 706-234-1667 or e-mail mehaff@webtv.net.

Any Army or Navy personnel who served on the South Pacific island of Bora Bora, French Polynesia, between February 1942 and September 1945, contact Fred Strayhorn, PO Box 1854, Sacramento, CA 95812 or call 916-392-7195 or e-mail tstrayhorn@opener.net.

Anyone who served in the 330th Infantry in Luxembourg in November 1944, contact Hume T. Johnson, 2164 Prospect Street, Penfield, New York 14526 or call 716-381-4346 or e-mail jeannetvrg@earthlink.net.

Anyone who served with the 503rd MP Bn. during September 1962 at Oxford, Miss., and Old Miss University, contact Mack Mullins, PO Box 25542, Fayetteville, NC 28314 or call 910-867-4292 or e-mail RMPAMACK@aol.com.

Any Navy military personnel who served in Beachmaster Unit 2 (BMU-2) at the Little Creek USNAB (United States Naval Amphibious Base) near Norfolk, Va., 1950s through 1990s, contact Robert L. Burton, 4820 E. Robinson Rd., Bloomington, IN 47408 or call 812-331-1078.

Anyone who served in New Guinea, Philippines, from 1943 to 1945 who might know a Cpl. Norman E. Wild or Frank J. Johnson, contact William Lott, 989 15th Avenue South, Jacksonville, FL 32250 or call 904-241-2290 or e-mail LOTTWM@aol.com.

Anyone who served with B Co., 1st Bn. 32nd Armor in Germany from 1960 to 1970, contact Diana Verschuur, Juttepeer 37, 6900 BR Duiven, The Netherlands.

Anyone who served aboard USS *Reedbird* AMC-30 at Pearl Harbor between 1943 and 1945, contact Ed Behnke, 712 Wilbur St., Kewanee, IL 61443.

Anyone who served in 273rd Aviation Co. and 652nd Det. (Skycranes) in Vietnam from 1969-1970, contact Patti Wood at 410-479-1154 or e-mail TarHe@dmv.com.

Anyone who served in 815th AAA Aw Bn. during World War II at Camp Haan, Calif., Ft. Irwin, Calif., Camp Stapley, England, or ETO Third Army, Antwerp, Belgium, contact Bob Gallagher at snade@uno.com.

Anyone who served aboard the USS *Williamson* DD-244 in May 1943, contact Susanne Evers, 809 Middle Rd., Camanche, IA 52730 or phone 319-259-1631.

Anyone who served at the POW camp during World War II in Deaver, Wyo., contact Johanna K. Gimmerson, 936 Sylvan Ct., Powell, WY 82435 or e-mail mrsrg@tritel.net.

Anyone who served at Old Fort Niagara in Youngstown, N.Y., contact Arthur Bowler, c/o Old Fort Niagara, Youngstown, NY 14174-0169 or phone 716-745-7611 or e-mail hisbow@ascu.buffalo.edu.

Anyone who served with a Railway Operating Bn. during World War II, contact Gerald Edgar, 230 W. 5th St., Garner, IA 50438-1404.

Anyone who served at the Dow Army Air Force Base in Bangor, Maine in April 1945, contact John Davis, P.O. Box 921, Brewer, Maine 04412 or email pippinlinh@com.com.

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Dr. Jack Klein, Dept. of Arizona. Nat'l M&PA Memb. 1960-1961; Nat'l Educ. & Scholarship Cmte. Vice-Chmn. 1960-1961; Nat'l Sec. Train. Cmte. Vice-Chmn. 1961-1962; Nat'l Child Welfare Cmtn. Memb. 1962-1966; Dept. Cmdr. 1963-1964; and numerous Department positions 1976-1997.

George Serr, Dept. of Idaho. Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice-Chmn. 1976-1977 and 1978-1982; Nat'l. Exec. Cmn. Memb. 1982-1984; Nat'l VA&R Cmsn. Region 8 Chmn. 1987-1988; Nat'l VA&R Cmsn. Region 8 Vice-Chmn. 1984-1985; Nat'l VA&R Cmsn. Region 8 Memb. 1985-1987 and 1988-1995; Nat'l VA&R Cmsn. Liaison Cmt. 1982-1984; Dept.

Cmdr. 1977-1978; and various Department positions 1976-1997.
John Leslie Brown Jr., Dept. of Kentucky. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 1969-1970, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1976-1977, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Memb. 1988-1989, Nat'l Defense Civil Preparedness Memb. 1970-1973 and 1976-1977, Nat'l Counter-Subversive

Activ. Cmt. Memb. 1964-1965, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Consultant 1984-1986, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1985-1990 and 1999-2000, Nat'l Amer. Leg. Magazine Cmsn. Memb. 1986-2000, Nat'l Secur. Liaison Memb. 1981-1983, Nat'l Public Relat. Liaison Memb. 1977-1979 and 1980-1982, Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 1983-1984, Dept. Cmdr. 1975-1976.

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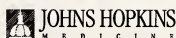
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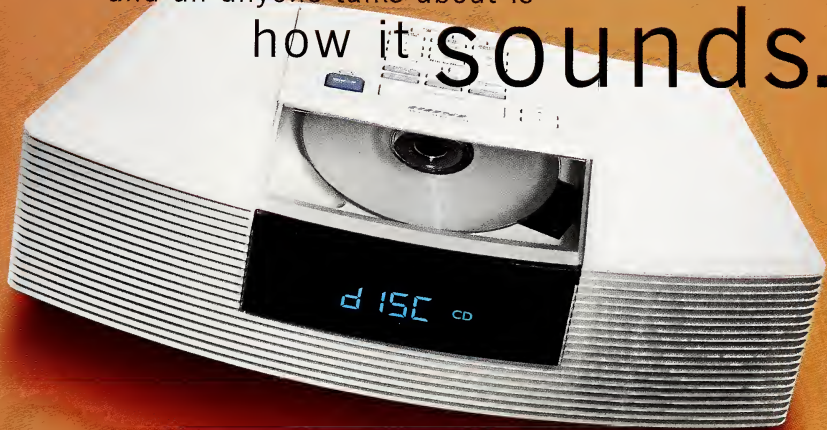
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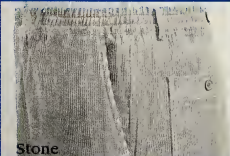
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